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THE  
Figg-less Figg-Tree:  
OR, THE  
D O O M E  
O F  
A Barren and Unfruitful Profession  
L A Y D O P E N.  
IN AN  
EXPOSITION  
UPON THAT  
P A R A B L E:

*A Certain Man had a Figg-Tree Plan-  
ted in his Vineyard, &c. Luke 13.  
6, 7, 8, 9, 10.*

---

By Nehemiah Rogers, a Minister of the Gospel of Christ.

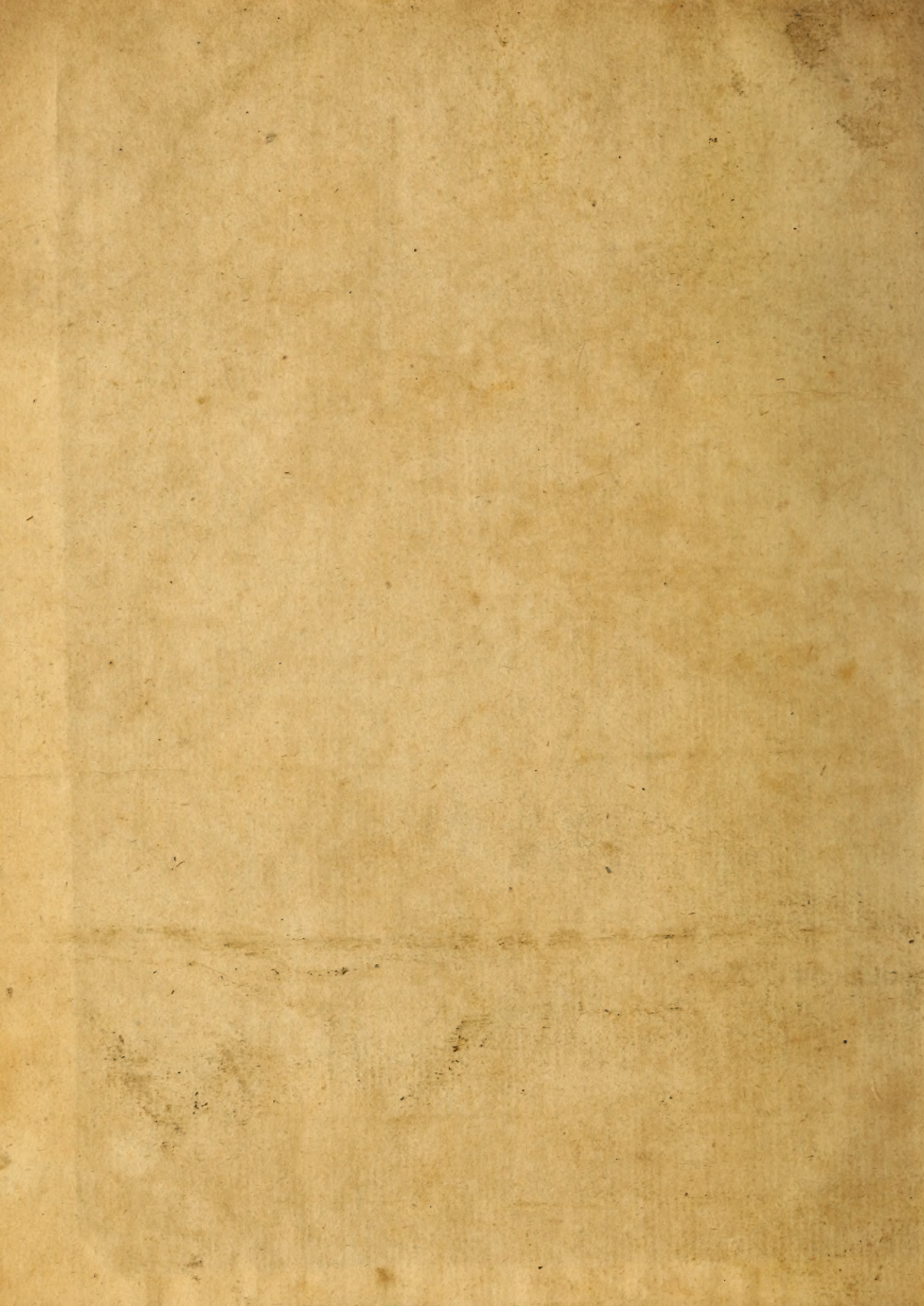
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*Now learn a Parable of the Figg-Tree, Math. 24. 32.*

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LONDON, Printed by J. S. for George Sawbridge, and are to be  
sold at the Signe of the Bible on Lud-Gate Hill, 1659.

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# THE Epistle Dedicatory.

To the Worshipful and Religious Gentleman, }  
Mr. Thomas Roberts, } and { To the Pious and Religious Gentlewoman  
of Little-Braxsted in } Mrs. Dorothy Roberts,  
Essex. } his Vertuous and Worthy Wife.

The Continuation and Encrease of all needfull Blessings in this Life, and eternal Life hereafter.

Good Sir,

**T**He Roman O-  
rator tells us,  
*Quod exemplo  
fit, jure fieri pu-  
tamus*; There are few  
Writers (humane or Di-  
vine) but they entitle  
their Labours, intended  
for Publique, to some  
particular Person whom  
they make choyce of, ei-  
ther to Patronize their  
Persons and Works, (in  
which Case Wisdome di-  
rects

Good Mrs. Roberts,

**T**Here is no Mo-  
nument so la-  
sting, to perpe-  
tuate the memory  
of godly Parents, and make  
them to survive after  
Death, as is the godlinesse  
of the Child: Solomon  
brings in the Children of  
the Vertuous Woman,  
spreading of her praise;  
They arise up, and call her  
Blessed, *Prov. 31. 28.*  
*which is not to be restrai-*

2 Tim. I. 5.



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

rects them to some Learned *Meccenas*, one of high Place, and eminent Parts and Power; who is able to shelter them from the malice of carping *Momus*); Or to testify thankfulness, for some special benefit received: (and in that Case discretion guides them to pitch their thoughts on some singular Benefactor). The Community of the Art, may plead an Immunity for my Action, in going the common road of Writers. Yet I close not with those who crave Protection; there is no need of that: for if it be Truth that I Preach and Print, it is God's, and needs no other Protector: If it be Error, all the Powers under Heaven are unable to support it: That I aim principally at, in my Dedications, is, The Testification of a thankful heart, to those, from whom I have received undeserved kindness; And, in the number of those, should I forget you, I should forget my self.

To

ned to a Verbal praise, given by Children to Parents whilst they live, (for that may proceed (as many times it doth) from self-love and flattery); but it is principally to be understood, of an Actuall and Real praising of her, both Living and Dead): which is done; when those shining vertues of Modesty and Humility, and other Graces that were in the Parent, appear in the Child, and proclaimes the Piety and care of the Mother in their Education.

Your Mother, (now with God) was a Godly and Religious Matron, (whom, for her more then ordinary endowments, both of Nature and Grace, I honoured whilst she lived, and cannot but gladly make mention of, being Dead); She had alwayes a great care of her Childrens Religious bringing up; and her joy was greater to hear, and see, that they walked in the Truth, then that they enjoyed fair Estates, and large Possessions in this World. I need not embalme her, being Dead with my Report, who living,

Mrs. Per.

John;  
Epist. 3.



# The Epistle Dedicatory.

To you Sir, I am many wayes obliged, for your abundant favours, & fruits of love, really expressed, even then, when it pleased God most to darken my outward Estate. For three years space I most comfortably enjoyed my Ministry, (through Gods goodness and Yours,) in that Parish where you now Dwell; all which time, I found your house to be both to me and mine, as the house of Onesiphorus was to Paul, a house of great refreshment; The shadow of your Trees was to me, as Jonah his Gourd was to him, very comfortable; but it pleased God to prepare a worme (what worme I will not say, but it went under the notion of an *unknown Friend*) which did smite my Gourd, and so gnaw the Stalk of my Shrowd, that it soon withered, to my grief.

I wanting those means (whereby the World doth usually testifie their thankfullnesse to their Benefactors) desire by this outward evidence, to  
give

ving, was so well reported of by all that truly knew her, and the grace of God that was in her; and now being dead, yet liveth in the godly Conversation of her Children (both Sons and Daughters) who manifest the fruit of their religious Education, by such a Conversation as becometh godlinesse.

Should I speak of those excellent Parts that God hath bin pleased to endow you withall, your Modesty would not like it, and those that are not well acquainted with you, would think I flatter, (but that is beneath my Calling, and above my Skill). This I may truly say (without flattery), that God hath enriched you with that which is more precious then Gold, A true and lively Faith, accompanied with the grace of Knowledge, the Government of Temperance, the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, the support of Patience, the Splendor of Humility; so that whilst you live, your Mother is not dead: and albeit, God hath not given you a fruit-  
full

2 Tim. 1.  
16.

Jon. 4.



# The Epistle Dedicatory.

give evidence to the World, of the inward disposition of my heart, in presenting to you, and sending forth under your name, this *Fruitlesse Figg Tree*: The Title promiteth little, yet, I hope under the Leaves thereof you will find some Fruit that will please your Religious palate.

I cannot doubt, but that, as you were a Religious Hearer of something of mine, that hath formerly past the Presse, (which, *in transitu*, as it was passing by, you called in, and gave it friendly entertainment), so you will be a profitable Reader of this, and give it House-room and Heart-room; and seeing it comes unto you, under your own name, it will be a welcome Guest unto you. And my poor Prayers shall accompany it, and follow you:

full Womb, yet he hath blest you with a fruitful Heart; insomuch, as that which the Prophet speaks, may in a good sense be applied unto you: The Desolate shall have more Children then the married.

Isa. 54. i.

To my self in Particular, you have bin like that godly Shunamite to Eliha; you have joynd as a Partner with your Husband, in his love and bounty, providing Light and Lodging, House-room and Fyring, and other necessities fitting for an Eliha: and therefore I make bold to joyn you with him in this Dedication, craving the like acceptance from you as from him. And I shall put up this prayer to Heaven, both for you and for him:

2 King. 4.  
10.

The



# *The Epistle Dedicatory.*

The Lord so assist you with his Grace, that by this, and all other good means, you may grow from Grace to Grace; that so perfecting your Sanctification in the fear of God, you may be made perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. Thus prays he, who is

Dodding-Hurst,  
Novemb. 1. 1659.

*Most obliged to you in the  
bonds of Thankfullnesse.*

*Nehemiah Rogers.*

To



T O

# The Reader.

*And more Particularly, to my wel-  
beloved, the Congregation of  
Dodding-Hurst in Essex.*

*Good Reader,*

**I**N the Closure of my Exposition upon that Parable of a Friend going to his Friend at Mid-night, *Luke 11. 5. &c.* I intimated my intent to go on, in the next place, with that ensuing Parable, of a Son asking Bread of his Father, *Luke 11. verse 11. &c.* But this, (as thou seest) is stept into the World before it: Yet know, that it is upon the birth, albeit, as yet, there is no strength to bring it forth: I doubt not, but with God's assistance, thou shalt see, The Father's blessing to attend both on this, and that before mentioned.

To you that have bin Hearers (in part or whole) of what is now set forth, I shall use the words of St. Paul, *To write the same things to you, which you before have heard, to me it is not grievous, but for you it is safe:* For to use the words of St. Peter, In this that I now write unto you, *I stirr up your pure mindes by way of remembrance.* The best of us are dull to conceive, hard to believe, apt to forget, and slow to practise: Let our minds be never so pure, yet there is great need of stirring up: Dead Ashes we stirr not up, but Embers, that be warm, to re-  
enkindle

Phil. 3. 1.

2 Pet. 3. 2.



## To the Reader.

enkindle the live-coals that lye hid under them : When we lay on green wood, we blow the fire, and do not stir it ; when dry, we stir the fire, and need not blow it : Proselytes stand in need of kindling ; well-improved Christians of stirring up, and quickening. And such I trust you are, (if you be not, it is your shame :) God hath blessed you with the means for many years together ; and, through the Religious care of worthy and conscionable Patrons and Patronesses, (for which this Place and Parish above many other have great cause of thankfulness) there hath bin a succession of godly and painfull Pastors, who have bin set over you, to watch for your Souls ; whose Labours God hath so blessed, that there is not (for any thing that I yet perceive at present) any Faction or Fraktion amongst you : No Papist, Anabaptist, Quaker ; nor any such like Schismaticke : you live in amity and peace one with the other (generally) ; which is not ordinary, and, in these times, a singular mercy. And yet I fear, That charge which the Apostle layeth upon the Hebrews, may be layd on some of you : when as in regard of the long and plentiful means you have enjoyed, *you ought to have bin Teachers* (not Publique Preachers, for that you ought not to be, but Teachers) to your Families, and one of another, in private communion ; you had need to be taught the *first Principles* and Fundamentalls of Religion.

It hath pleased God to bring me amongst you, and give me a comfortable Call unto you : For, besides the Nomination and free Presentation of me to that Place, by the Godly and Judicious Patron ; I was acquainted with the joynt, and unanimous desire of you all, (which you testified under your hands, by way of petition to the Patron, that he would pitch his thoughts upon me), that I might be your Pastor ; This indeed, made me (it being undesired) much more willing to undertake this Charge, which otherwise (I believe) I should hardly have bin drawn unto ; And now, having undertaken it, I desire God's assistance, and your prayers, that I may be found faithful therein, whilst it shall please the Lord to continue me amongst you ; *And that the Word may have free passage, and be glorified in us*, and by us, both Minister and People : And this I pray  
that

*Dodding-  
Hurst.*

Heb. 5. 12.

2 Thes. 3. 1.  
Phil. 1. 9,  
10, 11.

## To the Reader.

that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all Judgment, that you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere, and without offence, till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of Righteousnesse, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God: I shall second my prayers with my best endeavours. Read diligently what you have heard, apply conscionably what you read and hear, and bring forth fruit accordingly: so shall we one day rejoyce in this (both I and you), that we have not heard in vain, nor laboured in vain.

Dodding-Hurst.  
Novemb. 1. 1659.

Your Servant for the furtherance  
of the Salvation of your Souls,

*Nehemiah Rogers.*

The *Errata's* that have past the  
Presse, you shall find in the  
end of the Book.

---

The





# The Text.

Luke, Chap. 13. verse 6, 7, 8, 9.

Verse 6.

**H**E spake also this Parable: *A certain man had a Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought Fruit thereon, and found none.*

7. *Then said he to the Dresser of his Vineyard; Behold, this three years have I come, and sought Fruit of this Figg-Tree, and found none; Cut it down, Why cumbereth it the ground?*

8. *And he answering said unto him; Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall Digg about it and Dung it.*

9. *And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down,*



## A

### *Summary of all the Principal Doctrines, Collected and Illustrated from the several Verses of the Fruitless Figg-Tree, Luke 13. 6, 7, 8, 9.*

Verse 6.

**H**E spake also this Parable: *A certain man had a Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*

*Doct.* 1. The word spoke by the mouth of God's Ministers, is no lesse to be esteemed the word of God, than that which was spoken by Christ immediately. Page 9

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 2. Weighty matters should be pressed and insisted on. | 11 |
| 3. Repentance is a difficult, yet a necessary work.   | 17 |
| 4. Christ was no silent Minister of his Church.       | 18 |
| 5. Christ spake Parables.                             | 26 |
| 6. God is resemb'ed to Man in Scripture.              | 37 |
| 7. He takes upon him the Profession of an Husbandman. | 40 |
| 8. The Church is a Spiritual Vineyard.                | 44 |
| 9. The Church of Christ is but one.                   | 58 |
| 10. It is the peculiar Inheritance of the Lord.       | 68 |
| 11. Man is a Tree Mystically.                         | 71 |

12. Those



# The Contents.

12. Those Trees wherewith God furnisheth his Vineyard are of a Fruitful kind.	80
13. Those Trees which God expects Fruit from, are planted Trees.	84
14. The Church is God's Nursery.	89
15. Visiting follows Planting.	102
16. Fruit is expected from every Figg-Tree that God hath planted in his Vineyard.	105
17. Where God hath well deserved, there many times he is ill requited.	127

*Verse 7. Then said he unto the Dresser of his Vineyard; Behold, these three years I come, seeking Fruit on this Figg-Tree, and find none: Cut it down, Why cumbereth it the Ground?*

<b>Dost. 1.</b> The Ministers of the Word and Sacraments, are the Dressers of the Lords Vineyard.	153
2. The Dressers of God's Vineyard should be as one, in their Master's work.	171
3. God makes known his mind unto his Ministers, and acquaints them in a Familiar manner with his intents and purposes.	194
4. Great attention and regard is to be given to matters weighty.	203
5. Sin may not be looked upon with a regardlesse eye; or, God's complaints are not to be slighted or past over, regardlessly.	206
6. Barrennesse in a Figg-Tree is fault enough.	210
7. Circumstances of sin, give Aggravations to it.	218
8. God alloweth and allotterh to every Figg-Tree, growing in his Vineyard, a due proportion of time for the bringing forth of Fruit.	221
9. Time allotted (for bearing fruit) neglected, aggravates the fault. The longer Time the greater Crime.	224
10. To sin against the means, addeth weight unto the sin, and is most provoking.	249
11. It is God's usual manner to Speak before he Strikes, to pronounce Judgment before he Executes it.	261
12. Abscission	

# The Contents.

12. Abscission and cutting down, is the Doom of an Hypocritical and Barren Professor.	282
13. No outward Priviledge can secure a sinfull People from the stroke of Vengeance.	300
14. God's severest Judgments have alwayes most equitable reasons.	304
15. Barren Professors are Cumberfome.	313

Verse 8. *And he answering sayd unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall Digg about it and Dung it.*

<b>Dott. 1.</b> When God falls to complaining and threatening, it is high time, for such as have any Interest in God, to fall to praying.	326
2. When God is offended, Christ steps in and mediates, and puts a stop to the present proceedings of Justice.	334
3. Faithful Ministers may not be wanting (neither are they wanting) in interceding and praying unto God in the behalf of that unprofitable People which is committed to their charge.	342
4. Reverend Styles and Names should be given to our Superiours.	361
5. The Lord of the Vineyard is Lord Paramount.	362
6. The Lord alone is to be sought unto, in our prayers, and by our prayers.	366
7. It is as great a favour as can be expected or desired, for a sinner to be a while longer spared : Or, To be let alone or spared a while longer, is as great a mercy as can be desired on a Sinner's behalf.	370
8. God's Patience hath a Period.	380
9. Faithful Ministers seek not themselves, but the good of those committed to their Charge.	383
10. Good Ministers are great pains-takers.	386
11. Digging is one part of the Ministerial Function.	409
12. God's Ministers are to Dung as well as Digg.	420

Verse 9.



# The Contents.

Verse 9. *And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

**Doct. 1.** A faithful Minister cannot but be deeply afflicted with grief, in the behalf of such as remain unfruitful under his Ministerial Labours. 427

2. Where the Dresser's diligence accompanies the Owner's patience, there is hope even of the most barren Tree. 430

3. All will be well if we bear Fruit, though it be late first; Fruitfulness at last will make amends for all. 436

4. Barrenness may be found under the best and powerfull-est means. 443

5. The Dressers of God's Vineyard should be enclined to acts of Mercy, and not too forward in provoking God to acts of Justice. 456

6. By frequent prayer God is so overpowred, as that he cannot presently destroy. 459

7. Whatever be the Instrument, or who ever be the Agent: God is the principal Efficient of those Judgments which befall a People. 469

8. Greatest severity attends upon despised Mercy. 483

9. We are to rest satisfied and contented in the just and deserved condemnation of the wicked; albeit, they are dearly beloved of us. 491

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**THE**



Reader,

**T** *His same Author Mr. Nehemiah Rogers, hath lately printed, An Exposition on that Parable, Luke 11. 5,—11. Which of you shall have a Friend, and shall go unto him at Mid-Night, &c.*

*Also on that Parable, Luke 7. 40,—51. There was a certain Creditor, which had two Debtors, &c.*

*Also on that Parable, Luke 10. 30,—38. A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell amongst Thieves, &c.*

All to be sold by *George Sawbridge, at the Bible on Lud-gate-Hill.*

THE



# The

## Shewing the Method Observed and

The Reference in that Particle [*Also*]

The Preface,  
*vers. 6.* He  
spake also this  
Parable: where

The Instruction [He spake this] The Doctor [  
Parable] notifying } The Doctrin [

The Owner, { <sup>xxx</sup>  
v

his Pa-  
e we  
confi-  
ble,

Charles Halcomb  
His book Vol 4

47  
1752





# THE Figg-less Figg-Tree.

## TEXT.

LUKE 13. 6.—10.

*He spake also this Parable, A certain man had a Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard; and he came, and sought fruit thereon, and found none, &c.*



**I**T is storied of *Caligula*, that he feared nothing so much as Thunder, to drown the noise whereof he had an Engine made, wherewith he would make a kind of thundering noise when it thundred in the Clouds, and by the help of Burning-glasses (which he used) he would cast forth flashes of fire, in the face of Heaven. Not much unlike is the practise of Impenitent and obdurate sinners: they seem to tremble at the Judgments of Almighty God; when notwithstanding they go on in a provoking way, daring the God of Heaven, to their utter ruine.

Cast your eyes but a little back, and you shall read of some (*Galileans* it is thought) who acquainted Christ with *Pilate's* cruelty, in massacring of divers *Galileans*, the followers of that *Judas the Galilonite*, of whom *Gamaliel* speaks, *Acts*

*Dio. in vita  
Calig.*

*Judas Galo-  
nites.*

# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

*Joseph. Antiq.  
Jud. lib. 18. c. 1.  
Theophil. in loc.  
Occum. in Act.  
5.*

*1 Sam. 10. 17.*

*The Occasion.*

*Vers. 1.*

*Luke 12. 58.*

*Lyra. Bernard.*

5. 37. Who joyning in confederacy with one *Sadoc* a Pharisee, became the Authour and Ring-leader of a new Sect, different from the Pharisees in this, that they maintained none ought to be called Lord, but the Lord of Heaven, and did thereupon refuse to acknowledge *Cesar* to be their Lord: endeavouring by what means they could to shake off the Roman yoke, refusing to pay that Imperial Tax imposed on them; in pursuance whereof (as it is very probable) they assembled the people together, and under colour of Religious sacrificing (as the Prophets were wont) they hoped to gather into a Body, the better to effect their designe; whereof *Pilate* understanding (He being then Governour of *Judea* for *Cesar*) sent armed troopes, and cut them off before they were aware. Even whilst they were sacrificing, they were sacrificed; and so their blood was mingled with that sacrifice which they offered.

The News whereof is brought to Christ, at that very season when Christ was pressing on his Hearers the Doctrine of Repentance, and calling on them to make their Peace with God, and that betimes, whilst they were in the way; before they be arrested by Death, and haled before the Judge (no man knowing either the Time or Place or manner of his death). The Relators (it may be) supposing that the present instance of those so lately and cruelly murdered, was very pertinent to the purpose, and suited well with our Saviour's scope, acquaint him at this time with it, and seem desirous to have his Judgment both of the Fact, and Persons.

The quick and peircing eye of our Saviour (probably) discovered therein, a raine or trapp laid, to entangle him in his talk. (whatever other pretence might by them be made). Should he have Patronized the Persons slain, then he would have bin accused for a friend of Rebels, and seditious Persons; should he have spoken the least against *Pilate's* cruelty, he might have bin charged to have bin an enemy to *Cesar*; should he have approved of the Fact, then had he bin accused to the People as an Abettor of the Roman President in that bloody Massacre; Our Saviour (therefore) gives no direct answer to them, but takes occasion from thence, to enlarge



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

3

enlarge his former Doctrine, and enforce it upon the consciences of the Reporters, as well as others; *Suppose ye that those Galileans were sinners above all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

Vers. 2. 3.

And that they might not think him to be beholding to them for that example (for the illustration of his Doctrine) he puts them in mind of another Accident which fell out not long before, and nearer home, which was the fall of the Tower of *Siloam* in *Jerusalem*, whereby eighteen of the Builders, or Repairers of it (which is most likely): were slain outright: these were not alone destroyed, because they alone were wicked. For some are punished when others no less wicked are spared; in whole temporary repreivement the Judge of all the World doth represent the necessity of the last Assize, and may assure such as live in the like sinfull courses, of the same, of soarer vengeance without Repentance. They are punished that we may be warned, they corrected that that we may be amended, (for executions are done upon offenders for the benefit of the living, and not of dead (who cannot be bettered by Admonition nor Example) so that we may not rashly judge and censure them to be worse then others, whom we see to be afflicted more than others: Nor yet flatter our selves in our sinful wayes, for that the like Judgments have not befallen us, that have on others; For *I tell you* (saith our Saviour) (as before I told you), *Except you Repent, you shall all likewise perish.*

Vers. 4. 5.

Object.

But were we as great sinners as they, (might some of these his Hearers say), how comes it to passe that we speed better then they?

Resp.

This silent Objection Christ gives an answer unto, in the Parable now read, resembling God unto a Husbandman; who having a barren and fruitlesse Figg-tree growing in his Vineyard from which after much pains and cost bestowed on it, and some fruitfull return with much patience expected, finding none, he expostulates with his servant about the sterility and barrennesse thereof, giving him a charge to cut it down, or stub it up, that it may no longer take up that room

The Scope.

# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

in his Vineyard, whereon a more fruitful plant might grow. But the Dresser of the Vineyard (his servant) being grieved, that so goodly a tree (so look upon) should be stubbed up at the root, desires his Master's patience a while longer, promising to bestow some more paines upon it, than formerly he had done, hoping that then it would recompence its former deficiency; which if it did not, then down it should, and no longer be suffered to stand. This is your case (saith Christ.) and the case of the whole Jewish Nation: God hath chosen you to be a peculiar people to himself; He hath planted you in a rich and fruitful soyle, flowing with milk and honey: He hath sent his servants amongst you, who in no good point of Husbandry have bin wanting to you; and, with much patience, hath long expected some answerable return of fruitful obedience from you; which not finding, he long since past sentence against you, and resolved upon your utter extirpation and ruine: But through the earnest prayers and supplications put up unto him by his Servants and Prophets on *Jerusalems* behalf, he hath hitherto spared you, proving if at least, now at last, you will bring forth fruit meet for Repentance: which if you do, it will be well for you; but if not, no priviledge will exempt you from the stroak of Vengeance. And thus we have acquainted you both with the *Occasion* of propounding this Parable, and with our Saviour's *Scope* and drift in the propounding of it.

I shall in the next place cut out my work, and lay before you the several parts and members of it.

## The Parts.

The Parts are Generally two, the *Preface*, and the *Parable* it self.

The *Preface* we have in these words of the Evangelist; *He spake also this Parable*, intimating a *Reference* to what went before, in that Particel [*Also*], And the *Instruction* which followes after, *He spake this Parable*. Where we may take notice of the *Doctor* or Teacher [*He spake*], And then the *Doctrine* or lesson taught [*This Parable*].

The *Parable* it self, is first *Propounded*, *A certain man had a Figg-tree*, &c. vers. 6. And then *Prosecuted*, vers. 7.—10.

In the *Propounding* part, we have the *Subject* and the *Precicate* considerable.

The



The Subject, A certain man had a Figg-tree planted in his Vineyard; And there the Owner, and his Possession.

The Owner, A certain man, where we shall shew you, first, who he was, A man: 2d what he was, A Vinitor or Husbandman;

His Possession, he had a Figg-tree planted in his Vineyard, notifying first the Nature of his Inheritance in General, [A Vineyard]: For Unity one, A Vineyard, not Vineyards; and for Property, [His.]

Then the Plant of note in special thereon growing, which is set forth by its kind and quality: for kind Generally, A Tree; specifically, a Figg-tree. And for Quality: No wilde one but planted, (such was its Original); and that in no barren soyle, but in the Vineyard before mentioned, there was its site or placing.

The Predicate, [He came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.] And there we have to take notice, first of the Owners Visitation of that his Vineyard and Figg tree, he came unto it: secondly of his Expectation from it, [he sought fruit thereon, but found none]; fruit he sought, none he found.

The Prosecution of this Proposition we have, vers. 7. 8. 9. And therein, an Expostulation with the Dresser of the Vineyard about the sterility of that Figg-tree, vers. 7. and the Intercession of the Dresser made for it, vers. 8. 9.

In the Expostulatory part observe we, first the Person Expostulating, the Owner of that Figg-tree, Then said he: And Expostulated with, the Dresser of his Vineyard: Then said he unto the Dresser of the Vineyard,

Secondly, The substance of it, [Behold these three years I come &c.] Wherein we have first a sad Complaint, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this Figg-tree and find none. Secondly, A severe sentence, [Cut it down, why cumberst it the ground?]

In the Complaint, we cannot but take notice of the Manner, and Matter of it. The manner [Behold] calling for special attention and observation. The matter declared in these words [These three years I come seeking fruit on this Figg-

# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

*Figg-tree, and find none* ] where the *Grievance* [*Barrenness*] The *Aggravation* from the *Time* [three years] and from the *cost* and *pains* bestowed on it, implied in these words [*The Figg tree*] this which I my self planred, and that in mine own Vineyard where nothing is wanting that might conduce to fruitfulness.

The *severe Sentence* follows. *Cut it down, why Cumbers it it the Ground?* where the *Object* doomed, [*It*] that is, the Figg tree before mentioned; And the *Doom* itself, [*Cut it down*] shewing the *severity* of it, not lopp it, prune it, but Cut it down at the very Root, wholly ex-irpate it. And the *Equity* thereof expressed byway of *Interrogation*, [*Why cumbers it the ground?*]

The *Intercession* made for this Figg-tree follows, *vers. 8. And he answering said unto him, Lord let it alone this year also, &c.*

Where we have observable, first the *Persons interceding*, [*he said*], *Interceded*, [*Lord*]: Secondly, The *Request* made, *Let it alone, &c.* And there,

First, The *Thing Requested*, which is *Specified* [*Let it alone*] forbear it a while longer, and then *Exemplified* and enlarged from the *Time* [*this year also.*] And from the *End* [*till I shall digg about it and dung it*] that it may become fruitful. This was his Aime in General,

Secondly, The *Termes* or *Conditions* in special on which this Request is made, which are twofold; one on *his part* that was the Dresser of it, [*I will dig about it and dung it,*] I will bestow more pains upon it then heretofore I have done, if thou wilt be pleased to let it stand one year longer.

The other *on the behalf of the Figg-tree*, which hath two branches, the one *Affirmative*, [*If it bear fruit, Well*]: The other *Negative*, [*If not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*]

The Former hath in it a *Supposition* [*If it bears fruit*] suppose it do so; Then a *Determination* [*Well*] there is no more to be said (which albeit it be not expressed in the Original, yet it is implied). In the latter we have an *Addubitation* or *suspicion* [*If not*] he could not say it would; And a *Concession* in Case it did not, [*After that thou shalt cut it down,*]

I will



I will give way to the sentence, and no more speak in the behalf of it.

And thus I have laid before you the several parts & branches of this excellent Parable, which albeit it concerns a fruitless and barren Figg-tree, whereon the owner could not find so much as one Figg growing, yet (as *Solinus* speaks of the *Egyptian Figg tree*) we shall find it richly loaden with wholesome Doctrine, and heavenly instruction; bearing fruit not onely on the main stock and body of it, (which is the principal scope,) but on every branch and twigg thereof; which being wisely gathered, and with the hand of Faith plucked and applyed, shall (I hope) nourish our souls with much sweetness.

Cap. 35.

What *Fulgentius* speaks of all Scripture generally, may be truly said of *Parables* more particularly; they have in them *& quod robustus comedat, & quod parvulus sugat*, Meat for great ones, and Milk for weak ones: That which makes for the nourishment of weak ones, *habet in publico* (saith he); that which makes for the nourishment of the stronger, *habet in secreto*. Three things in every Parable are Principally considerable, *Cortex, Radix, Fructus*; The first is the Rind or Bark, the words or terms in which it is delivered, or the thing from which the Similitude is taken: The second is the Root, The Intention or purpose of the Parable, The drift or scope of it, beyond which the similitude may not be extended: The third is the *Fructus* or profit, which is to be gathered from it, and that ariseth from both the former (for the very Letter of the Parable will afford some good matter for heavenly meditation). But in the Letter we may not rest: the Rind is modestly to be put aside, the Vaile is to be drawn, and the spiritual Sense is especially to be perused. Take we notice (then) of the *Mystical meaning* of what is here propounded to us, in this Parabolical way, under this Similitude.

*A certain man had a Figg-tree, &c.]*

By this Man understand we the God of Heaven, who is so termed, not that he is so, or hath any humane shape; but, for the Capacity and comfort of men on earth, he is pleased to

Text.  
The Mysti-  
cal sense.

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*Lex loquitur  
linguam  
filiorum homi-  
num.*

Pfal. 80. 7, 9.

Isa. 5. 7.

Math. 21. 33,

45.

Pfal. 24. 1, 2, &

95, 4, 5.

Deut. 9. 26, 29.

Pfal. 33. 12, &

68, 9, & 78,

62, 71, & 79,

1. & 106, 5.

Isa. 5. 2.

Math. 21. 34.

John 2. 13.

John 5. 1.

John 6. 4.

to resemble himself to man, and ascribe unto himself sundry positions, notions, and transitions of men, and so to speak in mans Language, that he may be the better understood by man: Here he resembles himself unto a *Husband-man*, to set forth his care over his Church, which is here re- spected unto a Vineyard.

This *Vineyard* is the *Church Catholique* here on earth, and so it is often termed in Scripture, as *Psal. 80. 8, 9. Isa. 5. 7. Math. 21. 33. 45.* And however the whole earth be the Lords, and the fulnesse thereof, as we read, *Psal. 24. 1, 2, & 95, 4, 5.* Yet this Vineyard the Church, he termeth his *In- heritance* as if he counted himself to be owner onely of that, *Deut. 9. 26, 29. Psal. 33. 12, & 68, 9, & 78, 62, 71, & 79, 1, & 106, 5.*

This *Figg-tree* planted, and sited in his Vineyard, is princi- pally intended of the *Jewish Nation*, but more generally to be extended to every *Particular Church* and *Congregation*; yea to every *Individuum* or *Particular Person*, that professe themselves members of the Church Catholique, and live within the pale of it (saith *Austin*.)

The *Dresser* of this Vineyard mentioned, is to be under- stood of *Christ* principally and primarily; and of the whole Company of *Prophets, Apostles, and Ministers of the Gospel* secundarily; who are all the Under-Dressers of it, and though many, yet by an *Enallage numeri*, are summ'd up in one. [*Dresser*,] not Dressers.

The fruit expected is *faith and good works*, as is shewed, *Isa. 5. 2. Math. 21. 34.* This fruit God finds not, but the contrary, *Isa. 5. 7.*

The *three years* spoken of (in reference to the Jews) may not amisse (I conceive) be understood of the *time of Christs publique Ministry* amongst them, which had now bin three years and upwards: And his *comming for fruit*; of his several goings up to *Jerusalem* at three *solemn Passovers*, year by year, for three years together. But in reference to us that live under the Gospel, I understand that *large proportion of time* which God allowes to us for our Repentance, and producing of the fruits of Faith and Obedience; *Three* being



being put for *many*; a definite for an indefinite, a certain for an uncertain number, as elsewhere we find, 2 Cor. 12. 8.

2 Cor. 12. 8.

The *Cutting down* of this Figg-tree, (as it respected the *Jewish Synagogue* and *Itare*) sets forth the *utter subversion and extirpation of it*, with the destruction of the City and Temple by the *Romans*: But as it *concerns us*, so it notes the *Lord's rejecting* and casting off a people for their barrenness, according to that we read, *Heb. 6. 8.*

Heb. 6. 8.

The *year*, craved for sparing of it in *respect of the Jews*, is thought by some to be that *very year* when as Christ propounded this Parable unto them, which was the fourth current of his publique Preaching; but better they, who understand it of the *time of the Apostles preaching* amongst them after Christ's death, and before the destruction of *Jerusalem*: *One year* put for *forty* (saith *Cajetan*). And in *Relation unto us* we understand it, of the *time of Gods patient forbearing of us*; obtained by the Prayers of Gods faithful Servants, notwithstanding our manifold provocations.

The *Digging & dunging* about the Jewish Figg-tree, sets forth unto us, the *paines and labours* that *Christ's Apostles* and faithful Servants bestowed on that people, to bring them to Repentance; immediately after the Death of Christ: and so likewise it denotes the paines and labours that the *Ministers of the Gospel* now take, about the Christian Figg-tree, for the fructification of it. All this, with other particulars we shall (God willing) declare more fully in the Prosecution and Explication of each part in order. And first of the Preface.

*He spake also this Parable*].

Which words are the words of the *Evangelist*, and not the immediate words of Christ, and yet *no lesse to be esteemed the word of God*, then that which Christ spake with his own mouth.

Of all holy Writ it is Generally said, *Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. 1. 21. In the old time God spake by his Prophets, Luke 1. 70. Heb. 1. 1. *I will be with thy mouth* (said God to *Moses*) Exod. 4. 12. *I have put words into thy mouth* (said God to *Jeremiah*) Jer. 1. 9. *The Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David*, said *Peter*, Acts 1. 16. And this is true

Text.

Obs.

2 Pet. 1. 21.  
Luke 1. 70.  
Heb. 1. 1.  
Exod. 4. 12.  
Jer. 1. 9.  
Acts 1. 16.

2 Tim. 3.  
16.

Math. 10.  
28.

Robins.  
Essay of  
the Holy  
Scripture:  
Obs. 8.

Use.

Act. 10.  
33.

1 Thes. 2.  
13.  
1 Cor. 14.  
25.

Luke 4.  
16, 20.

also of those who wrote the New Testament; for *all Scripture is given by inspiration from God*, saith Paul, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Gods spirit did suggest and dictate, both for *matter* and *manner* whatsoever they wrote or delivered for Doctrine. *It is not you that speake, but the spirit of my Father which speaketh in you*, saith Christ, Math. 10. 28.

I do not say, that all things which these holy men wrote, were written by divine inspiration, for some things which they wrote, were written humanely, (as their humane affaires, common to them with other men, required), nor was all which they spake suggested by the spirit immediately, neither was all wherein they were divinely inspired both in preaching and writing, brought into the publique treasury of the Church, and made a part of Canonical Scripture; but onely so much as the Lord in wisdom saw requisite to leave to his Church, as the Rule of Faith and Obedience; so as that the Scripture should neither be defective, through brevity, nor yet burthensome by too great largesse and prolixity. But this I say, that whatsoever we find written in the Holy Scripture, (albeit upon some special occasion penned by the Pen-men thereof, as this Preface was) is no lesse to be esteemed than the word of the eternal God, than that which Christ himself spake immediately, with his own mouth, when he was on Earth.

It is a point that might afford us manifold Use, but I intend not to insist upon it: I shall onely leave with you this Admonition; when you come to the hearing or reading of the word, set your selves before God, with reverence and fear, as *Cornelius* did, who came not so much to hear *Peter*, what he should say, as what God himself should speak, Act. 10. 33. The same did the *Thessalonians* (for which St. Paul blesteth God). When they heard the word they received it not, *as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God*, 1 Thes. 2. 13. Then it is most likely to work effectually to our Conversion, and the Salvation of the soul, 1 Cor. 14. 25. We that are Ministers must speak as the words of God, alwayes putting a difference betwixt it, and the words of man, yielding thereunto greatest Reverence as our Saviour did, Luke 4. 16, 20. and absolute credence and obedience: But I shall carry this point no farther.

In



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II

In this *Introduction* or Preface we have to take notice, first, of the *Dependance* or Reference in that Partic<sup>e</sup> *ſe*. *Alſo* (before we come to the kind or nature of the following *Intruſion*). [*Alſo*] is a Copulative, and knits the Parable enſuing to the former diſcourſe: Our Saviour had before called upon his Hearers, for a ſerious & ſeaſonable Repentance, urged and preſſed that Doctrin<sup>e</sup> from the ſudden Judgments that had befallen others, and would befall them in caſe they ſpeedily repented not; Repeated and reiteated what he had aſſerted, that they might lay to heart, & reſt aſſured of the truth of what he had delivered, and after all this (when one would think that he had ſaid enough to the point) he adds this Parable [*alſo*] to what had bin ſaid: thence we conclude that,

*Weighty matters would be preſſed on the Conſcience, and inſiſted on.* Once ſpeaking is not enough, there muſt be an often reiterating, repeating, and inculcating of the ſame thing, if it be of weight and moment.

*Solomon*, ſtyled by way of eminency, the *Preacher*, ſpeaking of the vanity of the World, and worldly things, and ſeeking to expell and ſupplant out of mens heart the love of them, how often doth he inculcate the vanity of it? *Vanity of Vanities ſaith the Preacher, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*; which one verſ. (ſaith *Chryſoſtome*) they who are great in the world, (if they were wiſe) would write on all their walls and garments, *in foro, in domo, in januis, in ingreſſibus, & ante omnia in conſcientiis ſuis*, in their common meeting places, in their private houſes, on their doors, in their entries, and above all in their Conſciences: that ſo they might have it alwayes before their eyes, and alwayes have it in their minds.

And our bleſſed Saviour (a wiſer then *Solomon*) diſcourſing of the Kingdome of Heaven (a matter of much moment) that he might leave the ſtronger impreſſion of it in our minds, propoundeth many Parables one after another, as we read, *Math. 13*. He begins with the Parable of the Sower, verſ. 3. and having ended that, *Another Parable* put he forth (ſaith the Evangelist) and then *Another*, and after that *Another*, and then *Again*, and *Again*, and *Again*, pegging in (as it were) one with another, inculcating the ſame doctrine over and over, that

Doct.

Eccleſ. 1. 2.  
Cap. 2. 1.  
11. 17. 26.  
Cap. 4. 7.  
8. 16.  
Cap. 5. 7.  
10.  
Cap. 6. 2. 4.  
9.  
Cap. 7. 6.  
Cap. 8. 10.  
Cap. 11.  
8. 10.

Math. 13.  
3.  
Verſ. 24.  
Verſ. 31.  
Verſ. 33.  
Verſ. 44.  
Verſ. 45.  
Verſ. 47.

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we may attain to the understanding of those things, which concern the Myſteries of that Kingdome, which do ſo nearly concern us.

*Renſ.*  
Phil. 3. 1. And this is not more then needs; for us it is ſafe, *Phil. 3. 1.* and that, firſt, in reſpect of our Ignorance and dullneſſe in ſpiritual matters, (eſpecially in ſuch points as moſt eſpecially concern us) the eye of the mind is opened by degrees, now a little and then a little, *Iſa. 28. 10.* *Precept muſt be upon precept, and line upon line,* and it is not ordinary to underſtand aright what is delivered upon the firſt delivery: which might be one reaſon why the Gentiles deſired *Paul* to Preach over the ſame Sermon unto them, *Acts 13. 42.* which he did accordingly, *verſ. 45.* Beer newly broached, taſtes better at the ſecond or third draught. (we know) then at the firſt: and ſo it is many times in Sermons.

Secondly, In reſpect of the weakneſſe, and ſlipperineſſe of our Memories, which like Sives or Boulters let ſlip the fineſt flour, and retain little beſides the bran: in regard whereof the frequent inculcation of the ſame doctrine is neceſſary. When the Diſciples were put in mind by the two Angels, of the words of Chriſt, then they remembred them, *Luke 24. 6, 8.* and upon the ſecond Crowing of the Cock, *Peter* called to mind the words that Jeſus had ſaid unto him, *Mark. 14. 72.*

Thirdly, In regard of our backwardneſſe to believe and Practiſe, that which is required of us. Upon the firſt voyce that came to *Peter*, willing him to *Riſe kill and eat*, *Acts 10. 13.* He replies, *Not ſo Lord, verſ. 14.* but when that Voyce is heard a ſecond and third time, he learns obedience, *verſ. 16.* That wood which with a ſingle wedge will not rive, is ſplit with a double or treble one. Till we practiſe enough, tis never ſaid enough, ſaid *Seneca.*

This tends to the Juſtification of the practiſe of ſuch Miniſters as repeat to their Auditory, what they before have heard and learned, and ſometimes inſiſt ſomewhat long and largely upon an uſeful point. Seeing they do but imitate their Lord and Maſter herein, they need not be aſhamed of ſo doing. What we have ſaid before, we may warrantably ſay again, and repeat and beat upon the ſame Doctrine, till we perceive that our Hearers do

Luke 24.  
6, 8.

Mark 14.  
72.

Acts 10.  
13, 14.

Verſ. 16.

*Nunquam  
ſatis dici-  
tur; quod  
nunquam  
ſatis diſci-  
tur: Sene-  
ca.*



do rightly understand it, and are affected with it: Holy Doctrines are not like tricks done by slight of hand, to be shewed but once, for fear that what is admired at first, upon a second shewing will become ridiculous; but, the oftener they are taught, the better (usually) they will be understood and liked.

Yet this tends not to excuse any mans Ignorance, who is not able to Preach seasonably, and to break and distribute the bread of life according to the emergent necessities of the Congregation at that time: nor is it intended to excuse any mans idleness and laziness, that will not employ his time, his whole time upon his study, but is enforced through a willful and contracted necessity, to Preach the same thing again and again, that he Preached before; He is not a Preacher sufficiently qualified that doth so: but this I say withall (saith a Learned Doctor) that he is not a Preacher sufficiently discreet, that forbears the pressing of any necessary point, because himself or some other before him hath handled that before. Did not the Priests walk with the same Ark upon their shoulders every day, once for six daies together, about the walls of *Jericho*, and on the seventh day they compassed those walls seven times before they fell? Was not the King of *Israel* commanded to smite the ground again and again, and blamed for striking it no oftener, albeit he had struck it thrice? It is not once plowing, but the often breaking of the earth that makes it fruitful; so not once speaking but often urging, and frequent inculcating of divine truths that proves successful: Reverend and learned *Melanchthon* found this to be true, which caused him to go over the Epistle to the *Romans*, ten severall times in his ordinary Lectures.

And yet in seeking the profit of our Hearers, care must be had, that we clogg not their Stomacks, and marre their Appetites, (which may soon be done if the greater care be not had). There is *Defatigatio in Intellectualibus*, the soul may be wearied and tyred as well as the body: *Hast thou found honey, eat so much as is sufficient for thee,* (saith Solomon) *lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.* Upon which words an Hebrew Rabbín hath this Note, It is not said, that if thou bee't cloyed with it, thou mayest distaste

*Præcon.*

*Dr. Donne.*

*Jos. 6. 3.*

*2 King. 13. 18.*

*Caution.*

*Prov. 25.*

*16.*

*R. Moses.*

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dislike it afterward, or be disaffected towards it; but thou mayst vomit it, and a vomit works so, that it doth not onely bring up what was then eaten, but what was formerly taken, and in the Stomack, and we may apply it to the point in hand: Give we must of that honey which we have found, to sufficiency, but not to the surfeit of our Auditory, lest it cause them not only to vomit up, what is then of that point delivered, but take a dislike, yea a loathing of all the rest that they have heard from us.

And this may happen either by a frequent and disorderly repeating of the same thing, (which usually is occasioned through want of method, or want of matter) or by an overlong insisting upon some truth, which being known, makes little or nothing to the Edification of the Hearer.

Some things must needs be recalled, by the Minister in Preaching, to guide the attention of his Auditory, into the ensuing discourse; but the attention of an Auditory, may not be discouraged with needlesse Tautology or Battology, nor tedious repetition of the same thing that hath bin often said before. It is not commendable when a Minister, with the Clock shall tell all that was to'd many hours before, and content himself for that time, but with one stroke more; rather, as *Joseph's* brethren upon their return to their brother, brought double money in their Sacks mouths; and as *Jeremiah* added in the second role many words like unto the former. So should a Minister in his Repetitions, add to what was before delivered: Something (it may be) needs clearer explanation, and something better confirmation; And something, it may be, upon the first delivery slipt the memory: Now as in payment of money, if what was overseen in the first telling, be made up in the second; such a drawing over will not be very grievous either to the Creditor, or Receiver.

And it is likewise necessary, that some truths should be oftener inculcated, and longer insisted on then others, (according to the Doctrine that you have heard) but it would be, of such truths as are most useful and necessary; There be some things (saith a very Learned and Excellent Divine,) that are more necessary then others, and we are not weary of using them often,

yea

Gen. 43.  
15.  
Jer. 36.  
ult.

Dr. Stoughton, his  
Right wms  
Plea.  
Ser. 5.



yea alwayes : And somethings again though necessary and useful, yet if we use them alwayes, we shall quickly grow weary of them, if we feed constantly on them (as on Bief, Mutton, and the like); which albeit they are the best, and we can hold longer with them, yet if we use them alwayes and without change, the Stomack will be cloyed therewith : But bread we are not weary of, albeit we use it alwayes; nor are we weary of Drink, though we drink it constantly at our meals; whatever other dainties and delicates we have, yet these are common concomitants of all our eating and feasting: so it is with holy and divine truths; There are some which it may be more convenient to conceale, then to make mention of, in a publique Auditory (as might be shewed in some specialties appertaining to the seventh Commandement). And there are others which albeit sound and good, yet they are too intricate and high for an Auditory of a mean capacity; which a Minister (albeit his Text giveth him an occasion to deal withal) may with good discretion, forbear largely to insist upon, *John 16. 12.* But there are other divine truths which are necessary to be known of all, being of daily use, either for the stablishment of Faith, or practise of Life; the state and welfare of the souls of our people, doth very much depend on the frequent iteration and inculcation of them; nor will the Stomach of the Hearer be so soon cloyed with these, as with other.

And let me leave a word or two by way of Use, to you that are our Hearers. Are we to insist upon weighty points without wearinesse? then surely you are to attend upon that we so often presse upon you with much patience, *God hath spoken once, yea twice have I heard it,* (saith David) *Psal. 62. 11. that Power belongeth unto God,* what God speaks once, we may well hear twice; again and again, for it is worth the Hearing. But this is an ordinary Argument (may some proud spirit say) we have heard it an hundred times, till we are weary in hearing, that *God is Almighty,* what great matter is in that? And have you heard it so often? then me thinks you should get it (by heart shall I say? nay) in your heart, so as to make the right use of it, so as to fear him, believe in him, humble your souls before him, walk with him in uprightness; If thou makest not this Use of it, it

*John 16.  
12.*

*Use. 2.*

*Psal. 62.  
11.*

*Object.*

*Resp.*

*Psal. 118.  
6.*

*Isa. 25. 3.*

*Jer. 10. 7.*

*Mach. 10.  
18.*

*Rom. 4.*

*10.*

1 Pet. 5. 6.  
Gen. 17. 1.

is requisite that thou shouldst hear it a hundred times more, and a hundred to that, till it appear that thou hast profited by what thou hast heard.

*Chrysostome* preached many Sermons to his people of *Antioch* against Swearing; his Auditory began to be weary of that Subject, and asked him, When he would leave Preaching against that sin and choose some other Subject to discourse of? He told them that when they had left Swearing he would leave Preaching against it, and not before. And I have read of an Epigrammatist, who reading his Poems and Epigrams in a certain Auditory, one of his Hearers interrupted him, saying, This is an old one, I heard it from you the last year. It is like you did (said he); but is not that vice in you yet, which the last years *Poem* reprehended? If your curiosity bring you to say to any Preacher, I have heard this Doctrine handed by you before; this Text, or this Sermon on that Text preached by you a year or two ago. You did so, may he say, and you may hear it again the next year, and the next to that; till it appear by your amendment that you did hear it, you may hear it often. So long as the Devil fights with the same sword, give us leave to defend with the same Buckler; whilst he doth not vary the sin, nor the temptation, but tempts the Son to the same wickednesse that he did the Father, the Daughter to the same uncleannesse that he did the Mother; what need we vary the Doctrine?

Away then with that nicenesse, with that itch of the ear which the Apostle complains of, to whom any reiteration, any Repetition of the same thing (be it never so useful) is yrkesome and fastidious: *Peter* was greived because our Saviour said the third time *Lovest thou me*. We ought not to be so; we may not be offended at the often inculcating and frequent pressing of the same truth, seeing for us it is a *sure thing*. Make the right use of it, say not, If I had thought to have heard the same again; I would not have come to Church to day, I knew this before, have heard this often: But commune with thine own soul rather, after this manner; I thought indeed that I had bin sufficiently instructed in this point, but I find it otherwise, God sees that I have not enough learned it, and that I must make some better use of it, he will not have me to take out, turn over another

2 Tim. 4.  
3.

John 21.  
17.

Phil. 3. 1.



another leaf, nor take out a new lesson, till I have learned the old one better. I will hear it as if I never heard it, read it as if I never had read it before: It is Gods desire to fasten that nay!, which he knocks in with so many hammers.

As we have taken out this lesson from Christ's method or *Manner of Preaching*, in pressing and inculcating his Doctrine on his Hearers; so from the *Matter* pressed, something might be observed.

When things are much urged and ingeminated, in Scripture, usually three things are imported (as concerning the matter that is pressed on us): One is the Difficulty, another the Necessity, the third is the Excellency thereof. Repentance is the subject matter that Christ presseth (as you have heard) upon his Hearers, and all these three do meet in that duty.

Repentance is a *difficult work*, God must work it; It is not in mans power, *2 Tim. 2. 25.* And he peradventure will give it, no man is certain of it. It is a *Supernatural Grace*, not onely above nature corrupted, but nature created; for man in Innocency had no need of it.

It is a *Necessary work*: our Saviour before shewed the necessity of it, Except you Repent, you shall all perish, *vers. 3. 5.* So, *Math. 3. 10.* Turn or burn, there is no remedy.

And it is a most *Excellent* grace; A fair Daughter of a foul Mother, yet the Father that begat the Daughter could never abide the Mother, nor ever came near her bed. And this fair Daughter was the death of her Mother; she killed her that bred her, and was blessed for so doing: She was no sooner born but she spake, and did declare her own desires, and ever after doth work miracles; She makes the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and casts out Devils: She looks backward, and moves forward; is her self a dark Cloud, yet brings a fair Sun shine: Is this a Riddle to you? I will read it: Sin is the Mother, Repentance is the Daughter, the Mother is black and ugly, the Daughter fair and lovely: God is the Father of Repentance, and He could never endure the Mother sin, but hates her society; being born she slew her Mother, for by Repentance sin is slain, and in so doing God doth blesse her; she no sooner receives breath, but she cries for pardon and forgive-

D

ness;

Doct.

2 Tim. 2.  
25.

Luke 13.  
3, 5.  
Math. 3.  
10.

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ness. Miracles she works: the blind eyes are by her made to see the filthynesse of sin; the deaf ear she causeth to hear the word of truth, the dumb lips to cry out for grace, and the heart that was dead, becomes now alive to God, and the Devil that ruled in it is now expelled; She looks backward to sins past, and is humbled for them, yet she moves forward to holynesse and perfection. In short, Repentance is her self cloudy, and made up of sadnesse, yet everlasting joy and happinesse doth attend it.

But this is too large a subject for me to discourse upon, from so little warning as my Text gives, and yet were it not that I have pitched my thoughts upon another Text, which requireth a larger handling of this Doctrine; I would spend these few minutes that remain, in enlarging of the former particulars; wishing that the voice of this Turtle were more heard in our Land, that Gods faithful Ministers would not forbear Preaching it; nor the people ever leave practising it, till God be prevailed withall, to turn away his wrath from us, which yet hovers over our heads, as some birds do over their prey. Nothing but Repentance will clear our Coasts: Repent *England*, Repent, Repent, said Mr. *Bradford* at his death and Martyrdom.

From the word of *Connexion* [ *Also* ] we passe to the *Instruction*, [ *He spake this Parable* ]. And there we have the *Doctor* and the *Doctrine*, The *Teacher* and the *Lesson taught*, to take notice of.

The Doctor teaching, [ *He spake* ] He, before spoken of, Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, the promised *Messiah*, of whom the woman of *Samaria* spake; *I know that the Messiah will come, and when he shall come he shall declare all things*, John 4. 25.

That Christ is the chief Doctor and Teacher of the Church, we have heard proved from some other Parables; I shall not at this time enlarge upon that subject. That which I commend at present to your Observation, is,

*Christ was no silent Minister*, no dumb Priest: He was not tongue tyed, but a Preaching Minister, as appears, *Math. 4. 23. & 9. 35, 26, 55. Luke 4. 15, 16, 17. &c.* Inasmuch that all bare him witness of this, *vers. 22.*

He

John 4. 25.

True  
Convert.  
Doct.

Math. 4.  
23, & 9,  
35, & 26,  
55.  
Luke 4. 15,  
16, 17, 22.



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He was *the Word*, John 1. 1, 14. and that excludes silence and dumbness; In a man there are three kinds of speech. 1. *Sermo innatus*, that inward speech which the thought of man reflecting on it self produceth within, *Psal.* 14. 1.

2. *Sermo illatus*, a speech of inference; that speech which is occasioned in him by outward things, from which he drawes conclusions and determines.

3. *Sermo prolatus*, that speech whereby he manifests himself to other men. Christ is all three, He is *Verbum Innatum*, so he is the Natural or Essential word, which God produced out of himself, and so he is God: He is *Verbum Illatum* or *conceptum*, the word occasioned by the Fall of *Adam*; which is Gods decree of sending that his Son to be the Redeemer of Mankind. He is *Verbum Prolatum*, which is the execution of that decree, or the manifestation and application of Christ; whereby this word God-man becomes ours. That Christ, our Jesus, he that was anointed, our King, Priest and Prophet, becomes our actual Saviour. In neither of these senses, can he be said to be a dumb or silent word: but we have now to do with the last, He was the word manifesting and applying himself unto us, for our eternal salvation.

But how came it then to passe, that he stood so often dumb, and said nothing, being questioned for his life, as before *Caiphas*, (when false witnesses gave evidences against him) the like before *Herod*, and before *Pilate*; before these he spake not a word.

And good Reason there was for his silence before these. Being falsely accused before *Caiphas* he was silent, albeit urged to speak; First, for that he knew he came thither to suffer, being sent of his Father for that purpose, and not at this time to defend himself; Secondly, that by his Silence and Patience, he might intimate the vanity and falseness of their accusations, and give us an example how to carry our selves in the like case, *1 Pet.* 2. 21. Thirdly, for that he knew he should be condemned, albeit he should have cleared his Innocency; for his enemies were resolved to have his blood, and that hour he knew was now come.

He held his peace before *Herod* (say some) because he had

*Reas.*

John 1. 1,  
14.

*Object.*

Math. 26.

62.

Luk 23. 9.

Math. 27.

14.

*Reas.*

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Mark. 1.

2. 3.

Luke 23. 7.

Isa. 53. 7.

before taken away his voyce, in cutting off *John* the Baptists head (who was his voice as we read, *Mark* 1. 2, 3.) and how can one speak that hath lost his voyce? But other reasons may be rendred for that; First, it might be to abate the pride and vanity of *Herod*, who imagined that *Christ* would have shewen some miracle before him, *Luke* 23. 7. but our Saviour to shew how little he esteemed of his worldly greatnesse, would not so much as answer him a word: Secondly, he knew he should do no good with him, he being a man given up to all Voluptuousness and viciousness of Life; Thirdly, for that he knew he was to receive sentence not from *Herod* a Jew, but from *Pilate* a Romane, and that he was to dye by crucifying, after the Romane manner.

And being before *Pilate* he held his peace; First, for that in his conscience he was convicted of his Innocency, and therefore there needed no Apology before him. Secondly, he shewed thereby his magnanimity, in contemning death, had he answered any thing, it might have bin thought that he had bin desirous to save his Life, which he thirsted to lay down for mans Redemption: Thirdly, that he might acknowledge our singulinesse, he standing in our stead, and being now ready to discharge our debt: These may be some reasons of our Saviours silence at those times; Then he stood dumb as a sheep before the Shepherd, that the Scripture might be fullfilled, which had so foretold, *Isa.* 53. 7. *Acts* 8. 32. But when, or where do we read that he stood dumb as a Shepherd before his sheep? and that is the point we have now in hand.

Isa. 53. 7.

*Acts* 8. 32.

Use.

Let us make a twofold Use of this; First, seeing *Christ* was not dumb in speaking to us for our good, let not us be dumb in the cause of *Christ*, but find a tongue for Him, so as to confesse his name, *Phil.* 2. 11. declare his Truth, *Psal.* 40. 9, 10, & 119. 46, 172. set forth his praise, *Psal.* 34. 1, 35, 28, & 63, 5. *Vivat & regnet Christus*, said *Luther*, in spite of all adversaries. The tongue is the best member that we have for this service, so our old English *Plalmes* do read, *Psal.* 108. 1, *I will sing and give praise, with the best member I have*, even with my glory, as our new Translation hath it, And why my glory? Not onely because it was one of the Excellences and Prerogatives of Man, above other Creatures, that he is-enabled to use his tongue

*Phil.* 2. 11.

*Psal.* 40. 9,

10, & 119,

46, 172.

*Rom.* 10,

10.

*Psal.* 22.

22.

*Psal.* 108.

1.



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tongue to the expressing of his mind, but for that it is the Instrument ordained to the setting forth of Gods glory, in the advancement whereof the glory of man (as Gods principal Creature) doth consist: Thence it was, that the Devil (as it were in spite) took away from divers the use of the tongue in the days of our Saviour, and possessed them with dumbnesse, that they might not with the tongue give God that service, which was due unto him from it. And yet to this day he continues his malice, for this dumb Devil is rife every where, (saith a Worthy of our times), He is on the Bench when the mute or partial Judge, speaks not for Truth and Innocency; He is in the Pulpit when the Prophets of God smother, or halve, or adulterate, their Master's message, &c. And whilst he stopps the mouths of Christians from these useful and necessary duties required to be by the tongue performed to God or Man, the dumb Devil rageth and reigneth.

This dumbnesse is of dangerous consequence, That standing still of the Sun and Moon, which we read of, *Joshua 10. 12.* gave an occasion of shedding so much blood of the *Ammonites*. Now in the Original it is not, *siste sol*, Sun stand still; but *sile sol*, Sun be silent, (as the Margent of your Bibles will informe you) he bids them say nothing, make no noyse, no motion, stir not; suppose the Sun to be the Magistrate, and the Moon to be the Minister, (let it be so in your conceptions at present) if these be silent and dumb; if they command not, pray not, maintain not God cause, Christ's cause, and the Churches cause, the Cause is dangerous, and yet it is to be feared, much blood hath bin spilt through such silence.

It is dangerous in all, but in those who are in a more especial manner deputed to set forth Gods name, declare his truth, and give warning to the people, it is deadly; *Ezek. 3. 18.* *You that are the Lords Rememberancers be not silent*, saith the Prophet, *Isa. 62. 6.* Silence is the basest tenure saith one, that a Minister can hold his living by; Those Priests of old, that did not bark, were branded for *dumb dogs*, *Isa. 56. 10.* yea they were *greedy dogs*, saith he, *who can never have enough*, vers. 11. no marvel then that they were dumb. A bone (you know) in a dogs mouth doth marr his barking, that man, is such a Lecturer's good

Luke 11.  
14.

E. B. Hall.  
Cont. in  
N. J.

Joshua 10.  
10.

Ezek. 3.  
18.  
Isa. 62. 6.  
*Tenuisse  
silentia  
clerum.*  
Isa. 56. 10,  
11.

See a dogge  
and a Jewes  
trump iff thy  
loss these fouling  
is good for nothing

1 Sam. 10.  
13.

Ecclef. 3.  
7.  
Psal. 38.  
13, & 39, 2.  
Amos 5.  
13.

Acts 19.  
37.  
Acts 17.  
16.

Mark 1.  
44, 45.

Ezek. 2, 6,  
& 3, 18.

good Benefactor, yet he is an Usurer, a Drunkard, or an Unclean liver : But those sins must not be spoken of, least so much be lost Quarterly, &c. here is the mouth of the dogge stopped with a crull : Others have attained to some high place and preferment, and no sooner are they come to the high place, but they make an end of Propheying, as did *Saul*, 1 Sam. 10. 13. these likewise are choaked with bones, and are gigg'd with preferment. A dogge and a Jewes trump, (we say) are good for nothing if they have lost their tongues ; if it please you, you may add the third, and take a Minister into the number.

And yet there is *a time to speak*, and *a time to keep silence*, saith *Solomon*, Ecclef. 3. 7. *David* observed it, *Psal.* 38. 13, & 39. 2. and every prudent man shall keep silence in that time, *for it is an evil time*, saith *Amos* 5. 13. when there is danger of doing more hurt, then good by speaking ; when Gods glory is not therein interessed, the peace of the Church, and truth of the Gospel endangered by our silence, and our own liberty by speaking hindred ; then may we stand as Mutes, albeit we live in the midst of raging Consonants : And so *St. Paul* at *Ephesus*, forbore exclaiming and crying out against *Diana*, and their grosse Idolatry, as may be gathered from the speech of the Town-Clark, *Acts* 19. 37. And why there, more then at *Athens* ? his spirit was stirred in him there at *Athens*, when he beheld that Idolatry that was amongst them, *Acts* 17. 16. Surely because he saw that such an invective, would have done no good but much hurt, for it would presently have abridged him of his liberty, and have raised up bitter Persecution against him : And upon the same ground did our Saviour charge them, upon whom he had wrought his miracles not to speak of it to any man, *Mark* 1. 44, 45. Christian prudence enjoynes silence in evil times.

Indeed, this is rather true in private persons then in those whom God hath sent to deliver his message unto his people ; God layes his burthen on his Prophets, to burthen all sorts of men, with all sorts of sin, and to tell the greatest Potentates on Earth, that *Potentes Potenter*, the Mighty shall be mightily tormented, and where we are commanded to speak, we may not hold our peace, (albeit bryars and thornes are with us, *Ezek.* 2. 6,



6, & 3, 18.) It is safe to hold our faith, hold the truth, hold our profession, and to hold fast the forme of sound words; but hold our tongues we may, in no case. But yet affirmative precepts not binding *ad semper* to all times, only *pro hic & nunc* (as the School term is) wisdom should be shewed by Ministers as well as others, (and much rather) in reprovng and inveying against some corruptions that are either in Church or State. And albeit his Text gives him occasion to do it, yet if the iniquity of the times be such, that they will not indure it, and that more hurt (in all likelihood) then good will follow thereupon, he may (without fear of being a Time-server) be silent and forbear; And this is the first Use we should put this point unto. The second is,

1 Cor. 9.  
16.

If Christ have a Tongue for us, then let us find an Eare for him; his goodnesse in speaking implyes an obligation on us to hear him. And there is all the reason in the World for it.

Use. 2.

First, *God the Father commands us to hear him* Math. 17. 5. *Filius pronunciat qua Deus pater distat*, As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things saith Christ. *Joh. 8. 26.* Shall we hear the Serpent hissing; the Schismaticke seducing, &c. and not Him speaking? shall not he that made the Eare command the Door? he that gave the Hearing be heard before any other, calling on us for Attention?

Math. 17.  
5.

John 8. 26

Secondly, *He onely is worthy to be heard*, and that both in respect of his Person, Office, and message that he brings. For his *Person* he is both God and man, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* *God manifested in the flesh*, so, *Phil. 2. 6.* God he is, as is evident, *John 1. 1.* *Rom. 9. 5.* and God speaking is worthy to be heard, *Psal. 50. 1.* It is the voyce of God and not of man, said *Herod's* flattering Subjects, *Acts 11. 22.* But we may truly say when he speaks, *Nen vox hominem sonat, O deus ille!* It is the great God that speaks to us, & let us hear him.

1 Tim. 3.  
16.  
Phil. 2. 6.  
John 1. 1.  
Rom. 9. 5.  
Act. 11. 22.

And as he is *God*, so true *Man*, *Phil. 2. 7.* *Rom. 1. 3.* *John 1. 14.* the greatest, wisest and eloquentest of all the sons of men, and these three sorts of men usually command the ears of their Auditory.

Phil. 2. 7.  
Rom. 1. 3.  
John 1. 14.

When great men speak, all listen with great attention; every  
man

Ecclef. 13.

24.

Acts 12.

22.

Rev. 4. 10.

man holdeth his tongue, and look what he saith, they praise unto the Skyes (saith the Son of *Syrach*). So we read the people applauded *Herod*, *Acts* 12. 22. But who greater than Christ? who can compare with him in greatnesse, before whom all Kings cast down their Crowns, *Revel.* 4. 10?

Math. 22.

42.

Colof. 2. 3.

2 Sam. 16.

23.

1 Cor. 1.

20.

Acts 14.

12.

*Cicero.*

John 7. 46.

Cant. 5.

13.

He is *the wisest* of all the sons of men. The Queen of the South came from a far Country, to hear the wisdom of *Solomon*, and esteemed those happy who stood before him to hear his sayings, but behold *a wiser then Solomon is here*, *He is the wisdom of the Father*, all treasures of wisdom and knowledge dwell in him, *Colof.* 2. 3. *Solomon* was but a Child to him, *Achio- phel* (whose words were esteemed as Oracles) was to him a fool, he maketh foolish the wisdom of the world, and taketh the wise in their own craft.

Nor is any able to come near him for *Eloquence*, *St. Paul* was excellent that way, (*Tertullus* came short of him) he was a *Master of speech*. The Eloquence of *Demosthenes* was more feared by *Philip* then all the warlike Engines of the *Athenians*. And it is said of *Cyneas* that he conquered more Cities by his eloquence then his Master *Pyrrhus* did by puissance: but never man spake like Christ, *John* 7. 46. *His lips like Lillies dropped sweet Myrrh*, as we have it in the *Canticles*, the most oylie words are unpleasant, the smoothest elocution harsh, compared with his Language: Thus in respect of his Person, he best deserves our best attention.

Next consider him in reference to *his Office*, so he deserves to be heard of us, speaking to us: for as He is both God and Man, so in both these Natures He was designed and annointed by the Father, to be *King, Priest, and Prophet of the Church*.

Psal. 2. 6.

He was a *King*, and that of Gods own making and appointing, *Psal.* 2. 6. such a King as hath the Law of all truth and goodnesse in his own breast, the onely Law-maker, whose Laws are of such power as that they bind conscience, which no humane Law of it self can do.

Psal. 110.

4.

He had the Office of a *Priest* as well as of a King, *Psal.* 110. 4. He was *the High-Priest of our Profession*, and it was one of the principal works of the Priest under the Law, (as the Type) to teach men knowledge; from *his mouth* they were to seek



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it, *Mal. 2. 7.* But this is the Dignity of Christ alone under the Gospel, (as the truth to that Type). He is *the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts*, which he hath sent, *Luke 4. 18.*

And he was *the Prophet of the Church* whom God raised up unto us, of our Brethren, *Acts 3. 22.* like unto *Moses* in that he was Man, (but unlike to *Moses* in being God-man). Glorious Mysteries, and hidden truths were by him revealed unto us from the Father. And thus, in respect of Office, he above all is worthy to be heard.

Lastly, He is worthy to be heard in regard of the *Message* that he brings unto us, which is the *onely worthy Message* to be received *with all acceptation*, *1 Tim. 1. 15.* His errand was to save us, and that not from a temporal, but from eternal death, and damnation, *Luke 4. 18.*

Yet more Particularly, if we take notice both of the *matter*, and *manner* of His Preaching, we cannot but confesse he is worthy the hearing. For the *Matter*,

He speaks *Sublimia*, high and heavenly Mysteries, appertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven, *Psal. 49. 1, — 5. Math. 13. 12.* Now, strange and unheard of things usually we lend an ear unto.

He speaks *Suavia*, that which is sweet and comfortable to us all; he speaks words *in season* to those that are weary, *Isa. 50. 4.* and milk's out to his people consolations, and abundance of glory, *Isa. 66. 11, 14. Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden*, saith Christ, *Math. 11. 28.* and *I will ease you*; Oh comfortable and sweet! Sweeter to the taste than the honey or honey comb.

He speaks *Utilia*. of what is profitable for us, (as well as pleasant unto us): He tells us of a *treasure hid in a field*; which field and treasure being found and purchased, will make us eternally happy. And of an *Orient pearle*, which may be had at an easie rare, and is worth the buying, and which directs us what to do, that we may purchase these, yea, he acquaints us with a Kingdom that is prepared for us. Now matter of profit commands the ear.

He speaks *Vera*, nothing but the Truth; all that He speaks is true, *Prov. 8. 7, 8.* The two Testaments are the two lips of Christ; and the opening of those lips are *right things*. Wicked-

E

ness

*Mal. 2. 7*

*Luk. 4. 18.*

*Acts 3. 22.*

*1 Tim. 1. 15.*

*Luke 4. 18.*

*Psal. 49. 1, — 5. Math. 13. 11.*

*Isa. 50. 4.*

*Isa. 66. 11, 14. Math 11. 28.*

*Math. 13. 44. Vers. 45.*

*Math. 25. Vers. 54.*

*Prov. 8. 7, 8.*

*John 14. 6.*

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ness is an abomination unto them. Not a word in them but is the word of Truth, I am the Truth, saith Christ.

Now for the manner of Preaching, and delivering of his Message, it may very well command Attention, for,

He speaks *Familiariter*, familiarly unto us, as a Mother doth teach and instruct her Child at home, *Cant. 8. 2.* and as one Friend speaks unto another, *John 15. 15.*

He speaks *Amantér*: Lovingly and compassionately with singular tenderness, fitting himself to every nature and ability, *Isa. 40. 11.* He feeds his flock like a Shepherd, He gathers his lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom, and guides them with young, &c. And as the Eagle bears her young ones upon her wings, and teacheth them to fly; So he traineth us up, bearing with our infirmities, *Deut. 32. 11.*

He speaks unto us *Gloriosé*: Gloriously, with a marvellous shining light of knowledge, that may ravish our hearts and much affect us, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* and *2 Cor. 4. 6.*

He speaks to us *Efficaciter*, Effectually, so as if our hearts were dead within us, yet he will revive them, *John 5. 25.* To this end he hath given us the anointing, even his spirit in our hearts to teach us all things, *1 John 2. 27.* You see then what great reason we have to hear him speaking in all these respects.

See then that you hear him speaking, and despise him not, for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven (saith the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 25.*) they that despised Moses Ministry escaped not, *Heb. 10. 28.* The man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath day contrary to Moses Law, was stoned to death; *Corah, Dathan* and *Abiram* that murmured against him, were swallowed up by the Earth; and they that took their parts, were destroyed: and can you think to escape, if you despise the Ministry of the Son of God, and turn a deaf ear to Him, when he speaks to us: *Beléwels*, look to it therefore saith the Apostle, for it is as much as your souls are worth.

*Object.* This is a heinous crime indeed, you'll say, but we are none such.

*Resp.* It is well if you be not, but let me tell you, Many will be found despisers.

*Cant. 8. 2.*  
*John 15.*  
*15.*

*Isa. 40. 11.*

*Deut. 32.*  
*11.*

*2 Cor. 3.*  
*18.*  
*2 Cor. 4.*  
*6.*

*John 5. 25.*  
*1 John 2.*  
*27.*

*Heb. 12.*  
*25.*  
*Heb. 10.*  
*28.*  
*Numb. 15.*  
*32.*  
*Numb. 16.*  
*49.*



despisers of Christ, who yet have a good opinion of themselves. It may be that thou art no open despiser of him, none of those that send after him, to tell him plainly that they will none of him to Reign over them, nor of the number of those who hear, but deride his sayings, (as did the covetous Pharisees): but art thou not one of those, that when he speaks and calls for attention, putt'st him off with frivolous pretences and excuses, (as did those Reevant Guests, who were invited to the wedding Feast;) *I have bought a yoke of Oxen*, saith one, *hired a Farme*, saith another, *am new married*, saith the third, and must be excused; So I have this businesse in hand, such a way to go, I cannot to Church to day to hear Christ? Or if thou dost hear, dost thou not hear dully and drowsily, negligently and carelessly; entertaining his Doctrine like a tale that is told of no concernment? If so, then a be it you be not found in the former rank of Despisers, amongst open and prophane ones, yet you will be found in the other amongst secret and close despisers of him; and it will be required at thy hands.

But Christ is now in Heaven, he speaks not to us, How then do we despise him?

*He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me*, (saith Christ to his Disciples) (and in them to all the Faithful Miniisters of the Gospel); when any of them speak to us, they speak in his name, and he to us by them: thus he is said to preach peace to them who were a far off, and to them who were near; both to Jew and Gentile in that he did it, by his Miniisters, whom he put in Commission to do it. What he did in his own Person before his Ascension, he did after, and still doth by them, 2 Cor. 5. 20. John 13. 20. Math. 28. 20. So that to all such Objectors, Christ may answer as he did to those, Math. 23. 40. *In as much as you have refused to hear these, you have refused to hear me*; And such a refusal of him shall be (questionless) punished with his refusal of us at the last day, (without Repentance here) and in this Life usually some other Judgment doth attend it, (as dumbnesse and blindnesse,) one mischeivous impediment of salvation or other, as we read, Math. 13. 14. Acts 28. 26. Rom. 11. 8. And so much he spoken of the Person speaking, Now to the Kind of Doctrine.

Luke 19.  
14.

Luke 16,  
14.

Luke 14.  
18.

Object.

Respo.  
Luke 10.  
16.

Ephes. 2.  
17.

2 Cor. 5.  
20.  
John 13.  
20.  
Math. 28.  
20.  
Math. 25.  
40.  
Math. 13.  
14.  
Acts 28.  
26.  
Rom. 11.  
8.

*This Parable.*

A *Parable*, say some, is nothing else but a similitude derived from the truth of a thing, whereby one thing is understood by another. Or (as others) a truth wrapped up in some obscure and dark words; *Suidas* describes it to be, a setting forth of a matter by way of a similitude from something else, that differs in kind, and yet in some sort resembles and illustrates it. And the like description doth *Jansenius* give of it. It cannot be denyed, but the word is variously used; for, any *Enigmaticall sentence*, dark or obscure speech, is termed a Parable, as, *Psal.* 49. 4. *I will encline mine ear to a Parable, I will open my dark saying upon the harp*, So, *John* 16. 29. *Now speakest thou in plaine words, and no Parable.*

*Psal.* 49. 4.  
& 78. 2.  
*John* 16.  
29.

Secondly, Any *Adage*, proverbial or common speech, well known and generally u'ed, (especially by the wise) is termed a Parable. So, *Luke* 4. 23. *You will surely say unto me this Parable, (for so the words are), Physician heale thy self.*

*Luke* 4. 23.  
*Thw* *ωα-  
γαλωλ.*

Third'y, *Pythie and grave Sentences*, serving as Rules to direct our lives and actions, are termed Parables: so, *Prov.* 1. 1. the Proverbial sentences of *Solomon*, are called *the Parables of Solomon*: So, *Prov.* 26. 7. by a Parable is there meant a wise-saying.

*Prov.* 1. 1.  
& 26. 7.

Fourthly, *Allegories and Poetical fictions*, are likewise accounted Parables: so, that fiction of the Trees assembling together to choosse them a King, *Judg.* 7. 9. is termed *Jonathan's Parable.*

*Judg.* 7. 9.

Fifthly, Any *Comparison or Similitude* fetched from things earthly, to help our understanding in things heavenly, are so styled. So, *Math.* 13. 59.

*Math.* 13.  
59.

Sixthly, *Comparisons* drawn from mens actions and manners, these are more strictly and properly termed Parables; For how-ever similitudes and Parables seem in Scripture to be *Synonymes*, yet there is a difference. For, a *Similitude* is more *General*, A *Parable* more *special*; In every Parable there is a Collation, and comparing of two things together, (as the notation of the word imports) but every such Collation and Comparison cannot properly be termed a Parable: A similitude may be drawn from any thing in nature, but a Parable (strictly taken)

*Παραβολή*  
of *ωα-  
γαλωλ.*  
*Assimilo.*



taken) onely from humane actions or doings, and such a Parable is this which our Saviour at this time spake.

Of Parables, some are *Perfect*, and some *Imperfect*; Perfect, where the Exposition is added, such are the Parables of the Sower, *Math. 13. 3, 18.* And of the Tares, *vers. 24. 5. 7.* But there are others (and so the most are) barely propounded, but not expounded (in which respect they are termed Imperfect), the bread whereof we must eat with the sweat of our browes or braines; we must search them diligently, and descend into the bowels of them, as we do into the bowels of the Earth to find out silver; we must digg as for *hid treasure* to find out the spiritual meaning, which with a sleight observance or superficial diligence cannot be attained: And yet off this sort, all are not alike obscure; of some we may say as *Gregory* doth, that they rather require a *Practiser* then an *Interpreter*; and of that Nature this seems to be. That which I shall commend to your Observation is, That

## Christ spake Parables.

So saith St. Mark 4. 2. *He taught them many things by Parables.* And it seems by the Evangelists, that he much affected this Parabolical way of teaching. We read of Eight several Parables, that he propounded in one Sermon to his Hearers; St. *Mathew* mentions seven together, *Math. 13. 1, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47.* And there was another (omitted by St. *Mathew*, but) recorded by St. *Mark, Cap. 4. 26.* The Parable of the Tares which was at the same time delivered, and (as it justly is conceived) immediately after the Parable of the Sower, (and so was the second in order). And without a Parable he spake not to the people, say both those Evangelists, *Math. 13. 34. Mark 4. 34.* and that, not onely at that time, and in that one Sermon (as *Chrysostome* understands the place) but at no other time (as *Augustine* shewes): for albeit very many things were by him properly spoken as appears, *John 16. 26.* yet never any whole speech of his was plaine, and proper, without some Parable, Proverb, or Similitude wherewith he did adorne it.

The Reason why our Saviour used so frequently this kind of Teaching, may (in general) be this; There is no kind of speech, that doth more cunningly creep by an insinuating way into the under-

*Math. 13.  
3, 18, &  
24: 57.*

*Prov. 2. 4.*

*Doct.  
Mark. 4. 2.*

*Math. 13.  
1, 24, 31,  
33, 44, 45.  
47.  
Mark 4. 16.  
Math. 13.  
34.  
Math. 4.  
34.  
Chrys. Hom.  
50. in  
Math.  
Aug. Quest.  
Evang. 25.  
John 16.  
29.*

*Reas.*

*Parabola*  
*Heb. Ma-*  
*shal, à ra-*  
*dice Ma-*  
*shal. regere*  
*cū imperio.*  
*Buxtorf.*  
*Sandeī*  
*Symbol.*  
 fol. 168.

understanding, and hath greater command over the affections, than a Parable. It is most powerful to command attention; and effectual to move devotion: and of all wayes of teaching, this amongst the Jews was esteemed to be most powerful, in so much as they termed Parables and Comparisons, *Potestates*, Powers, or powerful insinuations, and they had an order of Doctors there amongst them, that professed this Parabolical way of teaching of the people; these they called *Moselin*, from power and dominion which they had over the affections of their Disciples; for teaching them in an obscure way, they created an Admiration, and a reverence in their Hearers, and laid a kind of necessity upon them, of returning again unto them for the interpretation, and signification of those obscure and dark sayings which they delivered; & in reference to this manner of teaching, it may be conceived (and so it is by some very learned Divines) that the Evangelist tells us that Christ taught *as one having Authority*, *Math. 7. 29.* and that *his word was with power*, *Luke 4. 32.* But however; undoubtedly he gained a reverend esteem among the people, by this his manner of Preaching, in so much that they held him at least to be some great and excellent Prophet.

*Dr. Donne.*  
*Mat. 7. 29.*  
*Luk. 4. 32.*

*Mat. 13.*  
*10. — 28.*

*Psal. 78. 2.*  
*Isa. 6. 9.*  
*Mat. 13. 34*  
*See my Ex-*  
*position on*  
*Luk. 15. v.*  
*3.*  
*Use. I.*

More special, and particular reasons are rendered by Christ himself, why he thus taught, *Math. 3. 10. — 28.* To the Effect it was in mercy and made for their Edification: But it was for Judgment unto the wicked, that the Mysteries of Gods Kingdom might not be revealed unto the scornful. Besides, the Scripture must be fulfilled which was foretold, *Psal. 78. 2. Isa. 6. 9. Math. 13. 34.* Of this we have said more on another Parable, wherefore the lesse here may suffice. Now to the Use.

*Ezek. 20. 49*

When the Prophet *Ezekiel* had (according as he was commanded) denounced Judgment against *Jerusalem*, under some obscure Types and dark Allegories, the perverse people took exception against him, and quarrelled with him for the obscurity of his Prophecies, and of this the Prophet makes complaint, *Ezek. 20. 49. Ab Lord God, they say of me, Doth he not speake Parables?* that is, he speaks Riddles, (as it were) to us, we know not his meaning: Thus apt are we to object against Gods



Gods Ministers, for their Allego ical expressions, Parabolical Illustrations, similitudinary Amplifications of their Doctrines; as if we, for want of other matter stuffed our Sermons with Fables, Fictions, Lyes, and we know not what: But when *Jotham* propounded that Parable of the Trees choosing themselves a King, whereby he convicted the *Sichemites* of their unthankfulness towards him, and his Fathers house, was that a Lye? And when *Jehoash* the King of *Israel*, propounded a Parable of the Thistle in *Lebanon*, which sent to the Cedar in *Lebanon* about a marriage for his Daughter, will you terme that a falshood? fictions they were indeed, but lyes and falshoods they cannot be called, in as much as they were not propounded to deceive, but rather to discover the truth, in a familiar and unfeigned manner, the mind and the tongue agreeing together, and the same end aimed at: And the like might be said of Tropical, Metaphorical and Hyperbolical speeches wherewith the Scripture doth abound.

Were it unlawful for Ministers to Illustrate their Doctrines by such Allegorical and Parabolical expressions, we may well think that God would not have commanded his servants to have done it, as he did, *Ezek.* 17. 2, 24, 3. Nor would Gods Prophets have used it, as they did. *Nathan* he comes to *David*, and teacheth him by a Parable. *Ahab* is reprov'd by the Prophet under the Parable of a Prisoner. *Israel* is taught under a Parable of the Vine. And the other Prophets, as *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, &c. abound therewith in all their Prophecies. The like might be shewed, was the practise of Christ's Apostles, under the new Testament. So *St. Paul*, preaching of the Resurrection, illustrateth it by many natural Similitudes. What shall I say more? if we peruse the writings of the ancient Fathers (especially *Chrysostome*) and of latter writers, we shall find that they make use of Parables very frequently, and to very good purpose. Nor do any writings more abound therewith than sacred. There we find a whole book of them bound up together, termed the Parables, or Proverbs of *Solomon*; He set in order three thousand of them: as we read, *1 Kings* 4. 32. They were the chosen Rules of his divine Art, some of which (even so many as God saw expedient for the good of his Church,) he hath left us as a rich treasury,

Judg. 9. 8.

2 King. 14. 9.

Judg. 20. 16.  
Joh. 21. 15.

Ezek. 17. 2, & 24. 3.  
2 Sam. 12. 1.  
1 King. 20. 39.  
Isa. 5. 1.  
Jer. 17. 11.  
Hos. 7. 11.  
1 Cor. 15. 36, 39, 40, 41.

1 King. 4. 32.

sure, being full of wisdom, and divine truth: Questionlesse, the spirit of God would not have suffered the leaves of Scripture to have bin sowed with so many Apologues, Riddles, Parables, Proverbs, Allegories, as are therein recorded; nor would our blessed Saviour, in whose mouth was never found any deceit or guile, have spoken so many, might they not lawfully and profitably have bin used of us: but, in so doing he gives us to understand the liberty that his servants have, in their Ministerial function, not onely barely and nakedly to propound their Doctrines, but to use the help of Invention and Art, for the Illustration of them: Provided,

First, That the Majesty of the Word be carefully preserved, and that no occasion be given to any, to think unreverently of so high a Myserie, by propounding any base and sordid stuffe, unto the Auditory, in a Parabolical or similitudinary way. The Rule is, In speaking of things Excellent, Comparisons would be fetched from things that are excellent: as, *Cant. 5. 10.* &c. But if of things vile and base, the Comparison would be taken accordingly as, *2 Pet. 2. 22.* Yet in speaking of things most base, nothing would be said unbecoming the Majesty of the Pulpit. All we speak, must become sound Doctrine.

Secondly, Comparisons and Similitudes that are brought for Illustration of Doctrine, should be fetcht from such things as are most familiar, and best known unto our Hearers. When the Prophets had to deal with the *Egyptians*, they alluded to fishers, and fishing; when with the *Arabians*, they took their Comparisons from flocks and herds: when with the *Tyrians*, and *Sidonians*, from Merchandize and Navigation: And thus did Christ as *Theophylact* observes, He took every man in his own trade, and applyed himself to that which they best understood in all his Parables: *Heraclitus* for his obscurities was styled the *dark Doctor*, and he was so affected with that way of teaching, that he would often will his Schollars to deliver themselves darkly; But Gods Ministers are studiously to shun obscurity. So *Austin* being more desirous of his peoples profit than his own credit, professeth that he had rather Grammarians should reprove him, than that the simplest should not understand him; It was *Origens* fault to turn all into Allegories, and

*Cant. 5.*  
*10.*

*2 Pet. 2.*  
*22.*

*Isa. 19. 4.*  
*Ezek. 27.*  
*10, 21, &*  
*26, 12.*

*Math. 13.*

*Bodin.*  
*Aug. in*  
*Psal. 138.*  
*Melius est*  
*ut nos re-*  
*prehendant*  
*Gramma-*  
*tici, quam*  
*non intelli-*  
*gant populi.*



and so (by destroying the letter) he made plain things, obscure; this may not be. Should our Allusions and Comparisons be of things unknown unto the Hearer, what *Plato* sometimes said of an obscure Example may in this case be spoken, *Exemplum, ô hospes, eget exemplo*, Another example had need to be brought to illustrate your example by.

Thirdly, That we use them not for ostentation of wit, but for edification and profit; *Hierom* taxeth those women who were *nimis candore deformes*, they deformed their native beauty, by painting themselves too white: No lesse worthy of blame are such as fill their Sermons with Allegories, and poetical Fictions, and take more paines to preach art and wit, than to preach Christ; There is a good use to be made of Wit, Invention and Art; these are the good gifts of God which may be used, and expressed in Similitudes, Allusions, Proverbs, Parables, &c. for the hearts of all are not so sanctified, that their ears need not to be delighted; we have to do with some of queisic Stomacks; with others of dull Capacities; with some who must be entised and allured with a baite of Eloquence, and industry of pritty and witty Sentences and Simile's (as some terme them). The *Israelites* were willed to borrow of the *Egyptians*, jewels of gold, and jewels of silver; to the end that they should offer them to God for the use of the Ark, and not to make a golden Calf of: So may we make use of humane Arts and Sciences for the furthering of us in the work of the Ministry, but we may not make Idols of them, nor secretly seek to be worshipped in them, and by them; this is a robbing God of his honour, and the Scriptures of their Excellency. The highest Preferment that Art and Wit can aspire unto, is, to be handmaids to Divinity; nor may they in their attendance on her, exceed in their dresse, and flaunt it too much.

These general Rules observed, God's servants may after the example of their Lord and Master, warrantably use their liberty in the discharge of the work of their calling, not onely barely and nakedly to propound Doctrine; but by Parables, Similitudes, Allegories, and the like to exemplifie and illustrate what they have propounded for their peoples profit.

But, Was it not in Judgment, that Christ spake by Parables unto the people?

F

Parables

*Hierom.  
Epist. ad  
Marcel.*

*Object.  
Math. 13.  
13.*

Resp.

Parables may aptly be resembled to the Cloud that led the *Israelites*: light some to the good they are, and very usefull; but to the wicked they are dark, and keep them from seeing what belongs unto their peace: When God shall take away (as sometimes he may.) from the most illuminate Teacher, clearnesse and perspicuity of expression, so that he proves obscure and hard to be understood, the Hearers should see the hand of God in it, and rather accuse their own impiety, then the Preacher's inability. Or, if truths plainly delivered, and clearly illustrated by Comparisons and Similitudes, be no more understood by us, then if they had been spoken in a strange Language unto us; if we hear plain Doctrines, as Parables (as did *Ezekiel's* Auditors him, and many in these daies, us; who, notwithstanding the clear light of the Gospell shining out in such glorious means, remain ignorant); this is a singular Judgment of God upon us, and a soire punishment of our unthankfulnesse, in shutting our eyes against the light of the Gospell sent unto us; Nor can a more fearfull Sentence be uttered in this life against a man, (saith a holy and reverend Divine) than to have it said, as Christ said of some, *Omnia ipsis in Parabolis fieri*, All is spoken to them in Parables.

2 Cor. 4. 4.

Dr. Taylor  
on the Pa-  
vable of the  
Sower.

Math. 13.

II.

Sacra Ve-  
lamina.

Dion. Arc-  
opag.

But, although it be in Judgment to the wicked, to be thus spoken unto, yet it is in mercy to the godly, as our Saviour shews, *Mat. 13. 11*. For albeit Parables are truly called Sacred Vails, yet when the Vail is drawn, and the Parable unfolded, and the shell crackt, the Kernell proves most sweet, and the light most beautifull and pleasant to a spirituall eye. I shall give you a most remarkable Instance, mentioned by Reverend *Beza*, in the story of the life and conversion of *Galeacius Caracciolus*, an Italian Marqueess, in the Kingdom of *Naples* and Nephew to *Paul* the V. This *Galeacius* being perswaded by one *Caserta* to hear *Peter Martyr* preach (who was then a publique Reader at *Naples*), upon his motion went; yet not so much for any desire that he had to learn, as moved and tickled with a curious humour, to hear so famous a man as then *Peter Martyr* was accounted; At which time, he was preaching on *St. Paul's* first Epistle to the *Corinthians*; and as he was shewing the weaknesse and deceitfulnesse of humane Reason, in judging of



of spirituall things, as likewise the power and efficacy of the Word of God, in those men in whom the Lord worketh by his Spirit, he amongst other things used this Similitude. If a man, walking in a large place, see afar off, Men and Women dancing together, and hear no sound of Instrument, he will judge them to be mad, or at least foolish; but if he comes nearer to them, and perceives their order, and hears their Musick, and marks their measures and their courtes, he will then be of another mind, and not onely take delight in seeing them, but feel a desire in himself to bear them company, and daunce with them: even the same (said *Peter Martyr*) betides many men, who, when they behold in others a suddain and great change in their looks, apparell, behaviour, and whole courie of life, at the first sight they impute it to melancholy, or some other foolish humour; but when they look more narrowly into the matter, and begin to hear and perceive the Harmony and sweet consent of God's Spirit, and his Word in them (by the joynt power of which two, this change was made and wrought, which before they accounted folly) then they changeth their opinion of them, and first of all begin to like them, and that change in them, and afterwards feel in themselves a desire and motion to imitate them, and to be of the number of such men who forsaking the world and her vanities, do think that they ought to reform their lives by the Rule of the Gospel, that so they may come to true and sound holiness. This Comparison to wrought upon that Marquesse, that through God's goodnesse, and the gracious assistance of his blessed Spirit, from that very houre he resolved with himself (as he told (many times) his friends) more carefully to restrain his Affections from following the vain delights and pleasures of the world as before he had done; and to set his mind on those things which made after true happinesse, which accordingly he did. And thus was his conversion wrought, at least his sanctification furthered, by this Similitude. Indeed no kind of saying, nor way of teaching, conveys the truth with more delight to the understanding, works more on the Affections, sooner strikes the Will, more helps the Memory, leavs a deeper impression with a feeling conceit, than this Parabolical and Similitudinary way of preaching doth: God

*in seeing of  
men and women  
dancing afar  
of or would  
judg them  
to be mad*

B.B. Abbot  
in *Jons*  
*Litt. 30.*  
*Plus mo-*  
*vent figu-*  
*rate dista.*  
*Aug. Epist.*  
*19. ad Jan.*

Hof 12. 10.

Text.

reckons it for a favour that he used Similitudes to his People, by the Ministry of his Prophets, *Hof. 12. 10.* And it will aggravate our sin (as it did theirs) if we profit not by such a manner of preaching. And thus we have done with the Preface or Introduction to the Parable. Now we come to the Parable it self, propounded by our Saviour.

*A certain man had a Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, but found none.*

These words contain the *Propounding part*, wherein we have considerable, 1. The *Subject* spoken of, 2. The *Pradicate*, or what is said of that Subject.

The *Subject matter*, *A certain man had a Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard.* Where we are to take notice, First, Of the Owner or Proprietor [*A certain man*]: Secondly, Of his Possession, or the thing owned, he had a *Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard.*

The *Pradicate* makes known, First, His *Visitation* of that his Possession [*He came unto it*], Secondly, His *Acquisition* [*He sought fruit thereon, but found none*].

[*A certain man*]

Who this man was literally, is not necessary to enquire: Should there be no such thing in being (or possibility of being), as that to which a Parable hath relation, it is no Parable; saith *Tertullian*. This is a Parable, and such a thing there either was or might be, and that may suffice. It is not materiall who it was: *Quidam* a certain man he was, be he who he would be, that is not to the point nor purpose. But, Myssically, *God* is this *man* spoken of in the Text. I hope there are none present, that have so grosse and carnall a conceit of God, as to imagine that God is corporeall, and hath a humane body and shape as man hath, which was the absurd opinion of the Sadduces, grounded upon a Text of *Moses*, (for other Scripture they admitted none besides his five Books) which Text was that in *Exod. 33. 20, 22, 23.* where we read that God willed *Moses* to stay in a cleft of a rock, and there putting his hand upon him, did shew him his back parts, but would not suffer him to see his face: Now inasmuch as *Moses* here attributed to God a right hand, and other parts, they concluded that God is corporeall, and hath a body as man hath:

*De vacuo,  
Similitudo  
non compete-  
tit: de nullo,  
Parabola  
non convenit.*

*Exod. 33.  
20, 22.*



hath : and of the same opinion was *Tertullian* (as *Austin* witnesseth) and some Heretiques besides, who by *Epiphanius* are called *Andiani*, and by *Austin*, *Vadiani*. But an opinion it is, so absurd and grosse, that the maintainers of it are rather to be severely punished then answered.

It is very true, that *God is resembled to man in Scripture.*

He likeneth himself to man, and speaks after the manner of men unto us. And many parts of man's body are ascribed unto him; as face, mouth, ears, eyes, arms, feet, &c. And so humane affections and passions, as joy, grief, sorrow, anger : And sometimes the inordinate and irregular passions and perturbations of man, as drowiness, frowardnesse, scorn, and derision, &c. But it is a true Axiom in School-divinity, *Whatever is spoken of God bodily, and humanely, must not be understood literally, but figuratively*; as setting forth some of his excellencies and attributes : He speaking to men with the tongues of the sons of men (say the Hebrew Doctors), that men may thereby have their conceits raised up to some knowledge of him; and that we being well acquainted with the Use, Office, and Effects, of things natural in our selves, might the better be helped in the conception of that God to whom they are ascribed by Transfiguration.

*Who is like unto the Lord our God* (saith David) *that hath his dwelling on high? who yet abaseth himself to behold things in heaven and earth*; But this we speak of, is a lower abasement than that; he doth not onely look down from heaven, but descend down from heaven, take on him man's nature, and become like unto us : *The Gods are come down unto us in the likeness of men*, said the *Lycaonians*, (of *Paul* and *Barnabas*) most blasphemously; but we may say truly and religiously, God is become like unto us, in appearing to us men, like Man; *Lord what is man that thou shouldst so regard him*, saith David *Psal. 8. 1.* And *Job* to the same purpose, *Chap. 7. 17.* *What is man that thou shouldst so magnifie him*, as to liken thy self unto him; and apply thy self and words to his infirme and grosse Capacity? Like the loving Father who to teach his Childe, will Shew himself as a Childe; so Thou, to teach us, becomest like us.

Sometimes indeed, God takes up terrible resemblances, and  
exhi-

*De Orig.  
animar.  
Vol 2. Tit.  
23.*

*Dost.*

*Quicumque  
de Deo corporaliter  
dicuntur  
dicta sunt  
Symbolicè.  
Lex loquitur  
linguam filiorum  
hominum.*

*Use I.*

*Act. 14. 11.*

*Psal. 8. 1.  
Job 7. 17.*

*Eliam in  
basilo  
conquere.*

Hof. 5. 14.  
Lament. 3.  
10.  
Deut. 4. 24.  
Heb. 12.  
29.

Prov. 8.  
31.  
Use 2.

Isa. 46. 8.

Dan. 4. 16.

Psal. 73.  
22.  
2 Pet. 2.  
10, 12.  
Jude 10.

that there is  
no Creator on  
earth but  
Heath is  
fellow in  
the Spar

exhibites himself sometimes like a *Lyon*, sometimes like a *Bear*, and sometimes like a consuming fire; but this is when he hath to deal with the wicked and impenitent, and when he is enforced unto it; No resemblance better pleaseth him, nor by any doth he more frequently, and more familiarly expresse himself unto us, then by this in our Text. which shewes the great love that he bears unto man, with whom his delight and businesse is; yea, so dearly is he beloved of God, that we may safely say (for Scripture warrants it) that for his sake God loves the very ground he goes upon: I took my solace saith wisdom in the compasse of the earth, *and my delight is with the children of men*, Prov. 8. 31.

Hath God thus honoured man? why then, let me use the Prophets words unto you. *Remember this and shew your selves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressours*, Isa. 46. 8. The true Essence of humanity lies not in the outside; *Nebuchadnezzar* during the seven years of his transformation, had not his outward shape changed, his heart was. *Let his heart be changed from mans, and let a beasts heart be given him*, was the word of his Vision: when the heart is Beastial or Diabolical, in a Case of humane flesh, (saith our Reverend *B B. Hall*); It is not the shape that can forbid man to be Beast or Devil.

This Beastly heart many have under Man's shape, it were a very easie thing to find in every vicious man more Beast, then hide or horn doth discover. *David* for uttering some rash and erroneous speeches in a strong temptation, saith, that he was foolish and ignorant, and a *very Beast* before God in so doing; What then think you are they, whose lives are meerly sensual, and voluptuous, who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and what they know naturally, in these things they corrupt themselves as brute beasts? Are they men, whose greatest delight is in drowning their reason, and extinguishing the light of understanding in them, which makes them men? Are they men, who make themselves beasts, and expresse the condition of the worst beasts, by returning with the Dog to the vomit, and with the Sow to their wallowing in the mire.

It is thought, that there is no beast on Earth which hath not its fellow in the Sea; we may truly say there is no Beast in the  
vast



vast desert of the World, which is not parallel'd in some men. We behold several sorts of beasts through their Dens, where they are kept, and we are told, that is a Lyon, and that is a Leopard, and that a Tyger: Should there be a grate to look through the heart of every wicked man, you should behold variety of beasts there, as *Bulls* and *Unicorns*, such were *David's* Persecutors; *Dragons*, such were the Churches enemies; *wilde Boares*, such were those who sought the ruine of her: *Lions*, such a one was *Nero*: *Foxes*, and such a one was *Herod*: *Wolves*, such are all greedy Judges, and false teachers, of whom we are warned to take heed. Should beasts be separated and taken away from amongst men (saith learned *Morney*), you would not marvel that *Jeremiah* should be willed to *run too and fro, about the Streets of Jerusalem, and seek in the broad places thereof to find a man*: Or why the Philosopher should seek with a Lynck at noon day in the populous City of *Athens*, amongst a great crowd, and in the midst of a great assembly of men, to find one man amongst them all. But, as it grieved the Orator to proclaim, as sometimes he was enforced to do; O my friends! there is no true friend amongst you; so it is no little grief to us, who must give an account to God of your souls, that we are enforced to complaine thus; Oh you sons of men! there is scarce a man amongst you to be found.

I will leave complaining, and fall to entreating and beseeching of you, not to dishonour your selves, seeing God hath thus dignified you: He hath put comeliness on our uncomely parts, let us not uncover them. If thine Eye be adulterous, thine Ear lascivious, thy Tongue blasphemous; how shall God resemble himself to any of these parts? would not a great man count it an high indignity to be resembled to an Ox, Ass, Dog or Serpent? Or should a Painter be willed to draw a man to the life, and he draw the Effigies of a Monkey, or the like, would not all condemn his skill? God made man not onely according to his Image, but according to his Similitude and likenesse, *Gen. 1. 27.* And the likenesse stands not in having a body and soul, but in the ability of both to work answerably to the righteousness and holiness of God: this should be our care, I beseech you brethren see to it.

Psal. 12.  
Psal. 74.  
Psal. 80.  
2 Tim. 4.  
Luke 13.  
Zeph. 3.

Jer. 5. 1.

Use 3.

1 Cor. 12.

Gen. 1. 27.

Yet

Doct.

Yet we have somewhat more to take notice of, for God is pleased not onely to liken Himself to Man, but He takes upon Him the profession of an *Husbandman*, resembling Himself to a careful and painful *Vintor*, that had a Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard, &c.

There are three parts of Husbandry; Pasturage, Tillage, and Vintage. All three are applyed to him, *Pasturage*, *Psal.* 23. 1, 2, 3. *Isa.* 40. 11. *Ezek.* 34. 11, 12. &c. *John* 10. 11, 14. *Tillage*, *Ezek.* 36. 34, 35, 36. *Jer.* 31. 27. *Math.* 13. 3, 4, 24. *1 Cor.* 3. 9. *You are Gods Husbandry*, or (as the word in the Original doth properly signifie) his Field-in-tillage; *Vintage*, *Isa.* 5. 1. &c. *Math.* 21. 33. *John* 15. 1. where He is expressly termed a Husbandman in relation to the Vine.

Eccly 10.

Use 1.

Gen. 3. 19.  
& 4. 2.Eccles. 5. 9.  
Gen. 25.  
27.2 Chron.  
26. 10.

I might from hence take occasion to speak something in honour of the Husbandman; his Calling is as *Antient* as any. God assigned it to *Adam*; he, and his Children were Husbandmen, and Tillers of the ground, *Gen.* 3. 19, & 4. 2. It is as *profitable* and commodious as any, neither Prince nor Subject can subsist without it, *Eccles.* 5. 9. It is as *free from guile* and deceit as any, *Gen.* 25. 27. *Esa* was indeed a Politick hunter, and a man of the field; so termed, not for that he was a Husbandman, but in regard that he was continually conversant in the field in hunting; that was his sport, there was his heart: But *Jacob* dwelt in tents as those did, who employed themselves about cattle, and he was a *plain man* without craft or subtilty: And it is in as *good account* with God, and good men as any. God hath honoured it, in that He hath so frequently resembled Himself unto it (and so He hath not to Goldsmiths, Drapers, Mercers, and other Callings of great esteem in the world) and *Kings* themselves *have not disdained it*, as we read, *2 Chron.* 26. 10. Little reason then have any to scorn it, as do many of your Courtiers and Citizens, who esteem no otherwise of Husbandmen then as Clownes and Peasants: But to passe by this.

Use 2.

Let us take notice hence of a farther degree of Gods love to man, who hath not onely vouchsafed to liken himself to man, and be made man for man; but hath also vouchsafed to condescend so low, as to take upon Him other Callings and Offices, (albeit very mean) and discharge the duties of those Callings towards



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towards man, for his good. He made us of *Clay*, and so he became our *Potter*: He *Stamped his Image* upon us, and so he became our *Statuary*, or *Minter*: He *cloathed us* when we were naked, and made garments for us, and so he was *Vestiarian*, our *Taylor* or *Wardroab-keeper*: God *builds us* up a spirituall house and Temple for himself, and so he is our *Architect* or *Builder*: When the Church is built, He *watcheth* over it, and keeps it from all ghostly and bodily enemies, and so he is our *Sentinell* or *Watchman*: He *wedderh us* and *marrieth us* unto himself, and so becomes our *Husband*: He *teacheth us*, and instructeth us in the Doctrine of Salvation, and so becomes our *School-Master*: He *cures* our *sicknesses* and diseases, and heals our wounds, and so he is our *Physician*: And, to *plead our cause*, and non-suite all Actions that are brought against us, he is our *Advocate*. And that nothing may be wanting to us, He *plants us* and *waters us* and gives the encrease; and so he is (according to the point delivered) our *Husbandman*.

Thus what the Apostle professeth of himself, *I am made all things to all men, that I may, by all means, win some*, may in a pious sense, be applyed to God himself; who, to gain us, turns himself after a sort into all shapes, and makes heaven all things to all, that he may gain all: To the *Merchant-man*, it is a rich *Pearl*: To the *Purchaser*, it is a rich *Treasure*: To the *Fisherman*, it is a *Nett* cast into the Sea: To the good *Houswife*, it is a *laying of Leaven*: And to the *Husbandman*, it is a *sowing of seed*. Christ puts no man out of his way, or out of his Calling, to get to Heaven: He presents himself to us in our own Element, and becomes to our souls what ever they can desire, that they may be wrought upon and enflamed with a love towards him:

Again, Is God a Husbandman? then doubtlesse we are his Husbandry, as the Apostle shewe h, *1 Cor. 3. 9.* and shall we not submit to his husbanding of us? The Earth is content to be rent and torn with Cutters and Shares, yet it patiently endures it, and returns fruit to the Plowman: The Vine suffers it self to be cut an wounded, and although it weeps and bleeds, yet it bears, and brings forth for the profit of the Vinitor: Let us endure all things that God, in his wisdom, hath ordained for the making of us fair and fertile: the best have much Fallow, yet to be

Isa. 45. 9.  
Rom. 9. 21.  
Gen. 1. 27.  
Gen. 3. 24.  
Act. 20. 32.  
2 Pet. 2. 5.  
Psal. 121.  
4. 127. 1.

Hof. 2. 19,  
20.  
Psal. 86. 11  
& 32. 8.

Hof. 14. 4.  
1 John 2. 1.

1 Cor. 3. 6.

1 Cor. 9.  
22.

Math. 13.  
44, 45, 46,  
47.  
Math. 13.  
33.  
Vers. 24.

Use. 3.  
1 Cor. 3. 9.

*Non  
est luxuri-  
andum.*

*Ila. 28. 25,  
24, 25.*

*Ezek. 36.*

*36.*

*Ila. 4. 4.*

*Hic ures hic  
seca, ut in  
aeternum  
pareas.*

*Aug.*

*Use. 4.*

*Plin. lib. 18.*

*c. 3. Cato.*

*Ila. 28. 26.*

*Prov. 24.*

*30. 31.*

*Ila. 28. 19.*

be broken up, the most fruitfull Vine hath luxurious branches, to be pruned and lop't off; better enduring the pruning hook than the fire; though we bleed, and bleed to death, better do so then burn. But God is a tender hearted Husbandman, He looks on our corruptions with grief of heart, and loves not to be alwaies chiding, nor will he be all day plowing: when he comes with his plough and harrow, with iron teeth, it is not to break our bones, but to kill our weeds, and mellow our hearts: when he comes into his Vineyard with his knife and pruning hook in his hand, it is not to kill us, but to mortify and kill those Lusts that are in us, which, if they were suffered to grow, would hinder our growth in Grace, and be our utter undoing. God will not be wanting to us, if we be not wanting to our selves. Say with *Austin*, Cut me, burn me here, that thou mayst save me hereafter: and with that Martyr in those *Marian* dayes, Here is my Back, do thou beat; to save my Soul from Hell's heat.

Again, This may make much for our comfort, that God is our Husbandman; and the Husbandman of the Church. A good Husbandman was of great account amongst the Romans (saith *Pliny*), and when they would speak in any man's praise, they used to say, He is an honest man, and a good Husbandman. But who can be compared with the Lord herein? It is from him that all other husbandmen have their skill; *His God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him* (saith the Prophet). Indeed, if we should cast our eyes upon the outward face of the Church, in the condition that it sometimes lyes, and upon the face of our Church, in the present condition as it now is, all-overgrown with Thorns of Errors, and Nettles of Heresies, and the stone wall of discipline broken down, you would judge it to be rather the Vineyard of a sloathfull and sluggish man, then of a wise God. But this our Husbandman is *wonderfull in counsell and excellent in working* (saith the Prophet, *Isay 28. 29.*): He best knows how to do all things well, and proceeds with height of deliberation and knowledge in all his actions; he best knows the Seasons, when to begin, and when to make an end; he hath his time to fallow, and his time to sow his Seed: Sometimes his Church is as a Fallow, and then no beauty appears on the face



face of it; the hedges are broken down, Hogs get in to roo, the ridges groan many times with weeds and thistles, great clods lye unbroken, all seems to be out of order: but it shall not alwaies lye thus; when he hath brought it in fitting case, (and in case he will bring it, albeit he makes use of his and the Churches enemies to do it, as *Psal. 129. 3.*) then he sows his Seed, maketh up the hedges, lugs the Hogs that are broke in to annoy it, and then some beauty shall begin to appear, and the work of the Lord will be seen to be excellent and admirable, in bringing his counsell to passe, and causing all things to frame to a sweet, seasonable, blessed, and comfortable end. God hath made *every thing beautifull in his time* (saith *Solomon, Eccles. 3. 11.*) they appear beautifull, when we observe, both the beginning and the end of them; As it is with pieces of Tapestry, which before they are joyned together, we know not what to make thereof; here lyes a Bird, there a Beast, here a piece of an Arm of a man, there a piece of a Legg, there a head. &c. but if we come a while after, when each piece is joyned together, you may read a perfect story. Such was God's dealing with *Joseph*, whom he purposed to advance unto high place and dignity, according to that made known unto him by his dreams, *Gen. 37. 5, 9.* which dreams he likewise made known unto his Father and Brethren, but was envied by his Brethren, and rebuked by his Father, for imagining a matter so unlikely: And indeed, if we consider God's working therein, to bring his counsell to passe, there was no likelihood at all in the judgment of flesh and blood, that it would ever be. First he was sold for a Slave, then falsely accused by his Mistresse, and thereupon cast into prison (and that for a long time), and there layd in Irons; yet God, who is wonderfull in counsell, and excellent in working, turned all this to *Joseph's* good, and made way thereby for his advancement, so that the end was beautifull, as the Psalmist shews. Other Instances I might give you, as in *Job, David, &c.* Wherefore wait with Patience, and rest assured that God will bring all to a good Issue in the end.

Lastly, we may from hence be directed what to do, and to whom to go with our complaints in the behalf of the Church, when we see (as at this day we cannot but see) her annoyed,

*Psa. 129. 3.*

*Psa. 90. 16, 17.*

*Eccles. 3. 11.*

*Gen. 37. 5, 9.*

*Psa. 124. 18.*

*Use. 4.*

Pfal. 80. 1.  
94. 1, 7.

Pfal. 80.  
14. &c.  
Vers. 18.

and (almost) wasted by the Beasts of the field, who have got in-  
to it, and make havock. *Give ear O Shepherd of Israel, thou that*  
*ledest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the Cheru-*  
*bims, shine forth; Ps. 80. 1, & 94. 1, 7.* As David there and then  
did fly to God, and acquaint him with the injuries that were of-  
fered to his Church, by the enemies thereof; so should we now,  
it is high time, *Return we beseech thee O God of Hosts, look down*  
*from Heaven, and behold and visit this Vine, and the Vineyard*  
*which thy right hand hath planted, Psal. 80. 14. &c. So will not*  
*we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name,*  
vers. 18. Of this Vineyard (the possession of this man before  
spoken of), and of the Plant of note thereon growing, we are  
now to speak.

Text.

*A Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard.]*

A Vineyard He had, that was his *Inheritance* in general; and  
a Figg-tree of note thereon growing which was his, *His* after a  
more peculiar manner.

By this Vineyard, we are not to understand any *terrestrial*  
*Possession*, such a one as Noah planted, *Gen. 9. 20.* and Nabal  
possessed, *1 Kings 21. 1.* but *Vineam Intelligibilem*, an Intel-  
lectual Mystical Celestial Vineyard, which is the Church of  
God on earth. And that,

Doct.  
Psal. 80. 8.  
9, 15.  
Cant. 8.  
11, 12.  
Isa. 5. 1, 7.  
Jer. 2. 21.  
Math. 20.  
1, & 21, 28.

The Church is a *spiritual Vineyard*, is a truth that hath strong  
confirmation from Scripture. In the old Testament we find it so  
styled, *Psal. 80. 8, 9, 15. Cant. 8. 11, 12. Isa. 5. 1, 7. Jer. 2. 21.*  
The like in the New, *Math. 20. 1, 2, & 21, 28, 33. Mark. 12. 1.*  
*Luke 20. 10.*

Quest.  
Mark. 12. 1.

But why is it resembled to a Vineyard, rather than to another  
thing?

Resp.  
Luke 20.  
10.  
Heb. 3. 2, 3.  
5, 6.  
Cant. 4.  
12, 13.  
1 Cor. 3. 9.  
Math. 3.  
12.

It is compared to many other things in Scripture, besides a  
Vineyard, as to a *house*, to an *Orchard*, to a *Garden* enclosed,  
to a *Field* in tillage, to a *threshing floor*, &c. But of all other  
resemblances of earthly things none doth so fully express, and  
set forth the nature and condition of the Church, as this of a  
Vineyard, which that it may appear the better, let us take no-  
tice of some particulars, wherein this spiritual Vineyard the  
Church doth hold resemblance with the other.



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First, A Vineyard, is a place, seperated and enclosed from other grounds. No Vineyard is naturally a Vineyard; hand and art must go to make it so: The Church is called, and separated from the world, both in life and conversation, as appears, *Levit. 20. 24, 26. Numb. 23. 9. Deut. 14. 2. John 15. 19.*

Secondly, No Vineyard is in its perfect glory, so soon as it is taken in. Her plants being set, come not presently to perfection and growth, but by degrees: So it is with the Church, *Ephes. 4. 11, 12.* Divers Workmen and Labourers are ordained to be employed about it, for the perfection of it, even after it is planted. The Apostles took great paines in planting Churches; but, had not Evangelists followed after, and watered what they had planted with a diligent hand, all had bin lost: And for this purpose St. Paul left Titus at Crete, after he had planted the Church there, to redresse things that were defective, or to straiten things that were apt to grow crooked amongst them, and to perfect his work. And hereto tends that prayer of Peter, *1 Epist. 5. 10.*

Thirdly, A Vineyard when it flourisheth, and is come to some perfection, is a place of great delight; both in respect of the pleasant smell that it yieldeth, and comfortable shadow that it affordeth; So is the Church, *Hos. 14. 6, 7. The smell of it is like unto a field that the Lord hath blessed.* Her Vines and tender Grapes give a good smell, *Cant. 2. 13, 14.* Her graces are compared to things most sweet, *Cant. 4. 13, 14.* And it affords a *Refrigerium*, a comfortable shadow, and Arbour against extremity of heat, according to that, *Isa. 4. 6. There shall be a Tabernacle for a shadow in the day time, from the heat; and for a place of Refuge, and for a covert from storms and rain.* The very enemies of the Church have found this to be true; Pharaoh flies to Moses and Aaron, and begs their prayers. So did Marcus Antonius of the Christians, in the time of his distresse, and was with his whole Army delivered from that danger that he was in, through their powerful prayers.

Fourthly, To a Vineyard it may be compared in respect of the Fertility, or fruitfulness thereof. It beares much fruit, and fruit of the best kind: A Vineyard is stored with divers plants (one plant maketh not a Vineyard); and those plants are loaden with

See my Ex-  
pos. on  
*Isa. 5. 1.*  
*Pag. 73.*  
*Levit. 20.*  
*24, 26.*  
*Numb. 23.*  
*9.*  
*Deut. 14. 2.*  
*Joh. 15. 19.*

*Ephes. 4.*  
*11, 12.*

*Tit. 1. 5.*  
*Ἐπιδοῦν.*

*1 Pet. 5.*  
*10.*

*Hos. 14.*  
*6, 7.*  
*Gen. 27.*  
*27.*  
*Cant. 2.*  
*13, 14.*  
*Cant. 4.*  
*13, 14.*  
*Isa. 4. 6.*  
*Exod. 9.*  
*27, 28.*

Acts 4.32.  
& 5. 14.

Isa. 49. 19,  
20. Cap.  
54. 1.  
Rom. 15.  
14.

Phil. 1. 11.  
Acts 9. 33.  
2 Cor. 8. 7.

Luke 21.  
4.

Judg 9. 13.

Math. 26.  
29.

Deut. 30.  
32.

with fruits, they bring forth in bunches and clusters, and not a berry here, and another there, but the load is such, that the branches bear, that it seems many times to exceed the strength of the branch that bears them; The Church is fertile of Children, there are *multitudes of them that believe*: So fruitful is the Church of Children, as that she wonders at her own increase, and saith, *The place is too strait for me; give place to me, that I may dwell: Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my Children and am left desolate*, Isa. 49. 19, 20, & 54. 1. (which is to be understood of the calling of the Gentiles, after the casting off of the Jews). And every member of the Church, every branch of the Vine is laden with good fruit, they *abound in every thing* in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in the works of Charity, 2 Cor. 8. 7. and therein beyond their power they are willing of themselves, *vers. 3.* they do all that ever they can do, and indeed many times more than they seem able to do, in the service of God, and love to man, as did the poor widdow that cast in all that ever she had into the treasury.

And as a Vineyard is more fruitful then any other plantation, so it yieldeth the best fruit of any other. No fruit is more delectable to the taste, nor more comfortable to the heart, then that which comes from the Grape. Let the Vine it self be heard speaking in *Jothams* parable, *My wine cheareth both God and Man*. It is an high Hyperbole, yet seconded, by the God of truth, *Math. 26. 29.* It must needs be an excellent Liquor (saith a Learned Divine) which is used to resemble the joyes of Heaven. And what fruit can be compared with the fruit that a Christian bears? all other fruit that grows without this fence, is but soure and bitter, seem it never so fair and glorious to the eye. yet it is but hedge fruit, or like unto the grapes of *Sodom*, and clusters of *Gomorrhah*, Deut. 32. 32. *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*, without the Church no salvation is to be expected.

Fifthly, A Vineyard is a well ordered place, there the Hills are equally swelling, the Stakes pitched in a good height and distance, the Vines handsomely pruned, the ground cleanly kept, and well howed, all things are well ordered in it. And so is it in the Church, insomuch that *Balaam* himself could not but admire at it, and in a rapt cry out, *How goodly are thy*



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thy Tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles O Israel: as the Vallies are they spread forth, as gardens by the Rivers side, &c. Numb. 24. 5, 6. as if he should have said, I see in this people (the Church of God) a most goodly order, in the pitching of their Tents according unto their Tribes, insomuch that my senses are therewith ravished, and I want words to expresse the glory and beauty of it; And in regard of this goodly order in it, *Solomon* compares it to an *Army with Banners*, Cant. 6. 10. St. *Paul* rejoiced to see order in the Church of *Colosse*, and commended them for it, *Colos.* 2. 5.

Sixthly, To a Vineyard the Church may be compared, in respect of the Imbecillity and weaknesse of it. No possession (saith *Cato*) requires more paines about it then a Vineyard doth; Corne comes up and growes alone of it self, without the Husbandman's care, *Invisa virescunt gramina*, Mark 4. 17. But the Vine is *fragile lignum*, a fraile kind of plant, it must be supported, sheltered, daily dressed and attended, else it soon waxeth luxurious, and is in danger to grow wilde, after it once waxeth wanton: The Church is in it self weak, compared to a woman, *Revel.* 12. 6. (and she is the weaker vessel) yea to a worme, *Isa.* 41. 44. It cannot stand without support; She leanes on her Beloved as her only supporter, Cant. 8. 5. and being fallen it cannot raise up it self, *Amos* 7. 2, 5. Hence it is that God takes such paines with it, *Isa.* 27. 2,—7. and sets up a Watch-Tower in the midd of it, *Isa.* 5. 2. lest the faithful City should become a Harlot, wilde, wanton, adulterous and idolatrous, as did the seven Churches of *Asia*, after their Candlestick was removed.

Sevently, A Vineyard is very subject to be annoyed and wasted, by the Beasts of the Wood, and Foxes of the Field which love to burrow under it, and delight to be cropping and pilling of her plants, and eating of her grapes, as *Solomon* intimates, Cant. 2. 15. So is the Church, her enemies are many that conspire against her, *Psal.* 83. 2,—13. There is the Boar of the Wood; (Tyrants and bloody Persecutors) that seek the vastation of it; and the wilde Beasts of the Field (prophane and vicious liveries) that intend her destruction; Besides the Foxes and the little Foxes, (Hereticks and Schismatiques) who pro-

Numb. 24.  
5, 6.  
Expounded.

Cant. 6.  
10.  
Colos. 2. 5.

Mark 4.  
17.

Revel. 12.  
6.  
Isa. 41. 44.  
Cant. 8. 5.  
Amos 7.  
2, 5.  
Isa. 27. 2,  
—7.  
Isa. 5. 2.

Cant. 2. 15.  
Psal. 83. 2,  
—13.

Psal. 80.  
13, 17, &  
94, 5.

fesse

Acts 8. 3.

fesse friendship to the Church, yet subtilly seek the ruine and subversion of it. Such a Beast of prey was *Saul*, before his conversion, *Acts* 8. 3.

Rom. 9. 6.

Math. 13.

25, 47.

John 15. 2.

Eightly, There is no Vineyard without some unfruitful branches; it hath something in it that is not of it: A Spider or Toad may get into it, stones may be found in it, weeds spring up amongst the good plants: So in the Church, they are not all *Israel* which are of *Israel*, not all fish that is in the Net, not all wheate that groweth in the Field, not all fruitful that are professed branches of the true Vine. There is a mixture of good and bad in the Church, and so will be till the coming of Christ.

Psal. 80. 6.

Lament. 2.

15, 16.

Ninthly and Lastly, the Church may be resembled to a Vineyard in respect of her despicable condition; in hard weather, and after it hath left bearing, then her beauty vanisheth, and no possession seemeth more contemptible: whilst the Church is in a flourishing condition she is regarded; but when she is persecuted and afflicted, then she is scorned and despised, her enemies laugh among themselves: *All that passe by her clap their hands at her, they hiss and wag their heads at the Daughter of Jerusalem; saying, Is this the City that men call the perfection of beauty? the joy of the whole Earth, &c.* Lament. 2. 15, 16.

Other Resemblances We might bring wherein the congruity betwixt an Earthly, and this heavenly Vineyard may be seen, but enough hath bin said, if we make good use of what hath bin said, which let us endeavour to do.

Use.

Plin. lib.

18. p. 552.

Cant. 2. 1.

Cant. 4.

13, 15.

Cant. 1. 8.

Cant. 4.

10.

Psal. 122.

Isa. 4. 5.

Cant. 2. 2.

And first in general, we may hence be informed of the excellencie of the Church above all other places, in that it is a Vineyard, which is preferred to all other possessions; (For that (saith *Pliny*) it yields the best revenue). *Glorious things indeed are (spoken of thee, thou Vineyard of the Lord. Thou art the Rose of the Field; the Lilly of the Vallies, an Orchard of Pomegranates, A fountain of Gardens, a well of springing waters; The fairest amongst women, The Spouse and Sister of Christ, The beauty of the Earth, The glory of the World: And (being compared with other Societies) as a Lilly amongst Thorns, and like the Apple amongst the Trees of the Forrest; All which comparisons and resemblances (with many more which might be alleadged) do evidently*



evidently set forth (besides this in my Text) the excellent dignity, and glorious excellency of the Church of God; and consequently the happiness and dignity of those who are members of it: which caused the good Emperour *Theodosius* to say, *Malo esse membrum Ecclesie, quàm caput Imperii*, I had rather be a member of the Church, than head of the Empire; And *David*, rather to be a *Door keeper in the House of God, then to dwell in the Tents of wicked men*, *Psal. 84. 10.* But more particularly from the former Resemblances, we may be instructed in sundry Duties.

Is it a Vineyard being seperated from other grounds? then we that profess ourselves to be members of the Church, may not live after the manner of the World, but separate ourselves from it, both in life and conversation, as is required, *Acts 2. 40. Ephes. 5. 11.* and by sundry strong Arguments pressed, *2 Cor. 6. 14, — 18.* Oh! that our Church did abound with such separatists! such as did seperate themselves from all unclean courses, and had no Commerce with the lusts of the Gentiles, and from all unclean company, so far as our Callings and Relations will give leave, *Psal. 26. 4, 5.*

It is true, that Lillies may grow amongst Thorns; *Pergamus* may have her dwelling where *Sathans* seat is: And if we should altogether avoyd the company of wicked livers, we must (as the Apostle speaketh) *go out of the World*, *1 Cor. 5. 10.* But there is a two-fold society or fellowship to be taken notice of: One is more general and cold, as in buying, selling, trading, and in other commerce, when Nature, Necessity, and other Exigencies of our Calling, either General or Particular, doth warrantably lead us thereunto: The other is more special and intimate, when we joyn our selves with those that are wicked voluntarily and needlessly, making them to be of our bosome Friends, men of our Counsel, &c. This may not be, God is offended with it, as taking part with his enemies, *2 Chron. 19. 2; & 20. 37.* and it may enfeeble us both in their sin and punishment, and so it is dangerous: If then at any time we be necessitated to keep company with sinners and wicked livers either in regard of *Divine Ordinance* which doth require it, as, *1 Cor. 7. 10, 11, 12.* (and so in other Relations); Or by an Act of *Divine Providence* which doth administer it, as, *Luk. 14. 15.* let us so associate with

H

*Psal. 84. 10.*

*Use 2.*

*Acts 2. 40. Ephes. 5. 11. 2 Cor. 6. 14, — 18.*

*Psal. 26. 4, 5. Cant. 1. 2. Revel. 2. 13. 1 Cor. 5. 10.*

*2 Chron. 19. 2, & 20. 37. 1 Cor. 7. 10, 11, 12.*

their

Luke 14.

15.

Si cum ma-  
lis, non ta-  
men in ma-  
lis.

1 Cor. 5.

11.

1 Cor. 11.

Revel. 2.4.

Cap. 2.13.

14. 15.

Vers. 20.

Revel. 3.1.

Vers. 16.

17.

Levit. 26.

11, 12.

Psal. 76.

1, 2.

thei Persons, as that we communicate not with them in their sins: *Society in sin* may not be had with the *best*; *Society, Inward* may not be had with the *worst*; but *Civil Society* may be had *with all*.

Secondly, As the Church is a Vineyard in regard that it is not presently brought to perfection upon the planting of it; then it may lesson some that are of the Schismatical separation; who, because of some infirmities that are in a Church, will not own it to be a Church. Should we separate for some defects and wants, to what particular visible Church on Earth will we associate our selves? Only the Church Triumphant in Heaven, is absolutely perfect, and without blemish; Corruptions in any Church, call for a *Reformation*; but all corruptions do not warrant a *Separation*: Corruptions in mens manners do not; for albeit in private conversation we are to separate from the society of notorious Offenders, (except in cases before excepted) yet a separation from a particular visible Church, cannot be thereby warranted. The Church of *Corinth* was a true Church, notwithstanding their manifold disorders: And the Church of *Ephesus* a true Church, notwithstanding her declinings: So was the Church of *Pergamus*, notwithstanding she was seated in Sarhans circuit, and pestered with the Sect of *Baalatmies* and *Nicolaitans*: *Thyatira* a true Church, notwithstanding her *Jesabellizing*; So was *Sardis*, notwithstanding her secure deadnesse; And *Laodicea*, notwithstanding her lukewarmnesse, poverty, and nakednesse: All these Churches had their failings in point of manners, yet were they the Churches of Christ, and might not be separated from; for that God had not forsaken them. God indeed had threatened some of these, that if they would not repent and amend, he would unchurch them: and take his Candlestick from among them; but till he put his threat into execution, and removed his Tabernacle and worship, they were to be acknowledged and revered as the true Churches of Christ: So such corruptions may be in a Church as deserve God should forsake it, and for which God in his word hath threatened that he will forsake it; but before it appear that God hath indeed forsaken that Church (which doth not appear (but the contrary) so long as God continueth his word, and doctrine of salvation to a people, *Levit. 26. 11, 12. Psal. 76. 1, 2.*) we may not forsake it.

In



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It is not then *Corruption in manners*, that warrants a separation from a Church, it must be *corruption in Doctrine*. Nor do all Errors that a Church holds even in point of Doctrine, warrant us to separate from it, but errors great and weighty: smaller errors cut not off salvation, and therefore may not cause a separation. For where salvation may be had from these Assemblies, separation may not be made, *John 6. 68*. Nor may all errors weighty, even in the substance of Doctrine or Foundation, cause a separation, for they may be held of weakness, and through infirmity, but if they be obstinately maintained, and willfully persisted in, then with a good conscience we may (nay must) separate from such a Church, as doth so maintain them, *Act. 19. 9*. And upon this ground have we separated from the Church of *Rome*; for whilst she onely taught her damnable Doctrines, and prest them not upon us, as matters of faith, to be believed on salvation, but came with, *It may be*; our Fathers forsook her not, but sought her cure. But when she would not be cured, but persisted in her damnable errors, bringing them into Canon, pressing them upon the conscience with *It must be*, as Articles of Faith *de jure* to be received, believed and practised; Anathematizing us if we did not so, Excommunicating us for not doing so, giving us no room amongst them but the fire: So forward were they to burn Heretiques, that they counted it Heresie not to stay to be burnt (as one speaks). Indeed we went from them upon God's call, and not upon their driving; but, had we upon that account left them, they had little cause to chide us for leaving of them. To conclude (then) this branch of my Admonition; If any of you be enclined to separate from the Church which hath begotten you, born you in her womb and arms, nursed you at her breasts; and wherein God hath sealed you up to himself in Baptism, Examine well what errors those are that are in her, and of what nature they are, before you separate: good consideration must be had that they be fundamental, and maintained with obstinacy; and then, what well-grounded assurance you have, that those errors are repaired, and no other as great as those, admitted in that other Church to which you joyn your selves: Errors there will be in all Churches, and to think to find a Church without

1 Cor. 3.

15.

John 6. 68.

Gal. 1. 2.

Act. 19. 9.

Hof. &  
Ecc. Hist.  
Lib. 1. c. 7.

Jude 19.

Aquin. in  
Phil. 3.  
Lect. 29.

Math. 5.  
48.  
Heb. 6. 1.  
Gen. 6. 9.  
2 King. 20.  
9.  
1 Cor. 2. 6.  
Phil. 3. 15.

any imperfection, you must then (as that Religious Emperour *Constantine* said to *Acesius*, a Novatian Bishop one of the same humour) set up a Ladder to Heaven and climb up thither alone; In the meantime mark, how St. *Jude* hath marked such, as seperate themselves from our Church-assemblies under pretence of corruptions that are in it, *These be they that seperate themselves, sensual, not having the spirit*, vers. 19.

Nor let any of us dream of attaining to an absolute State of Perfection here, which was the opinion of the *Catharists* and *Novatians*, and it is maintained by some Anabaptists and others: There is a two-fold Perfection, saith *Aquinas*, *Via* and *Patria*, The former is incident to man in the state of *grace*, whilst he is yet a way-fairing man, and a stranger on Earth, the other is that which he shall have in the State of *Glory*, in his Heavenly Country: Of the former we now speak. We deny not, but there is a State of Perfection attainable in this life, which we are willed to seek after, *Math* 5. 48. *Heb* 6. 1. And confesse that some have bin said to be perfect in this life, as, *Gen* 6. 9. *2 King* 20. 9. *1 Cor* 2. 6. *Phil* 3. 15. But we must distinguish again; This is two-fold, First, of *Justification*, that admits of no latitude, neither *magis* nor *minus*; it is perfect in all, and that, the first hour; one is as perfectly justified, as another: This is here to be had. The other Perfection is of *Sanctification*, and this is either *Partial* or *Gradual*; of Parts, or Degrees: the former is when the Image of God is so repaired in us, as that no part is wanting in the new man; every part and power of the soul is renewed and formed: As the Childe hath all the parts of the Father, when it is first born, and brought into the World, this is haveable. The other is, when there is not onely all kinds of graces, but that fulnesse and perfection in them, as may suite with the state of grace, in this life, and so far as man is thereof capable during his earthly condition. But here we must make bold to distinguish again.

This Perfection of Degrees, which the Saints are capable of in this life, is *Absolute* and *Accurate* or *Comparative* and tolerable: *Accurate Perfection* is, when a man attains to that degree of it as he ought to have, and doth every thing so absolutely, that no exception can be taken against it: This none on earth have;



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have; None have done so much good as they ought to have done, or might have done. None have attained to that degree of holynesse, that they might have attained unto; And yet, in that they might have attained unto it, there is a possibility of it, as the Apostle intimates, *Phil. 3. 14.*

*Phil. 3. 14.*

*Comparative Perfection*, is that spoken of *Gen. 6. 9. Phil. 3. 15.* Though a man hath not attained to that degree he might have attained unto, yet *κατα τι* in respect of others he may be said to be perfect. Thus the true Christian is Perfect, being *Perfectly Justified, Perfectly Sanctified*, having all parts and powers of soul and body renewed. And for *Degrees*, perfect *comparatively*; but that *Absolute Perfection* which he ought to have here, and that fullness which hereafter he shall have when he comes to his own Country, he yet wants, and here in this life shall want; yet such a Perfection as may suit with the condition of a Christian, travailling here on earth to heaven, he ought to seek after, and endeavour, and by his lawfull endeavours, he may attain unto it: Who so aimeth not at the *Perfection of Degrees* cannot comfort himself in this, That he hath the *Perfection of Parts* in truth in him.

*Gen. 6. 9.  
Phil. 3. 10.*

Thirdly, the Church (as you have heard) is compared to a Vineyard, for the pleasant smell that it gives, and the shadow that it yeilds, in both which respects we are to shew our selves the true Members of it: *Pliny* tells us that the smell of a Vineyard is such, that it drives away all Serpents, and venomous Creatures; And such should our lives and conversations be, as that by our well-doing, the mouths of foolish and wicked men (who are apt to pry and spy into our courses, to see what evil they can find out, and fasten on us) should be silenced (or muzzled), *1 Pet. 2. 12, 15.* And that all the world may see, they lie when they speak evill of us (saith *Hierom*). Such a Conversation is sweet, both to God and man; God is delighted with it, Man is comforted and allured thereby, to love and like the way of Godlinesse, and to blesse God, that ever they saw the power of it, in the lives of Christians.

*1 Pet. 2. 12,  
15.*

*ut nemo de  
nobis male  
loqui absq;  
mendacio  
possit. Hier.  
Epist. ad  
Col.*

The Primitive Beleevers led such convincing lives, (as *Ter-tullian* shews) that they were honoured of their very Enemies. *Justin Martyr* confesseth of himself, that by beholding their pi-  
ety

1 Pet. 2. 9.

ety in life, and their patience in death, he concluded that they walked in the truth, and thereby he was brought to glorify God in the day of his visitation. *Luther* led such a life, as that it was approved by all men, (saith *Erasmus*); his very enemies could not accuse him for any thing in poynt of Practise: The like was said of *Bucer*, who so lived, that neither could his friends sufficiently praise him, nor his foes justly blame him: *Bradford* was had in such great reverence and admiration for his holinesse, that a multitude who never knew him (but by fame) lamented his death; and a number of Papists themselves wished his life. A godly life is like a sweet Oyntment, compounded after the Art of the Apothecary; Oh that the whole House, the Church of God, were filled with the savour of it, that it were more sent in all places, in all companies, where we come. *Ye are a chosen Generation* (saith *St. Peter*) *that you should shew forth (or preach forth) the vertues of him that hath called you out of darknesse into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Our lives should be as so many Sermons upon the life of Christ. And that Oyntment that was powred on the head, should savour in every member of the Body.

Job 19. 15,  
16.

And as we must send forth a *sweet Savour* in our lives, so should we likewise yeild a *Shadow*, to them that are scorched by heat of the Sun; and be a Shelter to them from the violence of the weather. Such a shadow was *Job* to the Fatherless and the Widdow, the oppressed and distressed; he was *Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame: A Father to the Poor, and the Cause which he knew not he searched out*. Job 19. 15, 16. And such a Shadow should all in authority be, as was good *Obadiah* to the persecuted Prophets of the Lord; he hid them *by fifty and fifty in a Cave and fed them with bread and water*, 1 King 1. 8. 4. 13. O that *Great men and Courtiers* would give such a Shadow: Every one in his place should afford a Shadow to such as are in distresse, according to that 1 Thes. 5. 14. *Comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, &c.*

1 King. 18.  
4. 13.1 Thes. 5.  
14.

Gen. 19. 8.

The Roof of the house is a shadow; so we find *Gen. 19. 8*. Therefore are they come under the shadow of my Roof (saith *Lot*). All Household Governours are to be a Shadow to those under their charge; the Husband to the Wife, as the Fowl is



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to the young ones which she covers under her wing, *Ruth. 3. 9.* the Parent, to the Child; the Master, to the Servant, &c. Care must be had that they that dwell under our shadow may return, and revive as the Corn, and grow as the Vine. *Hos. 14. 7.* Yet our Shade must be good and wholesome, no harbour for Swearers, Drunkards, nor other vicious Livers. *Psal. 101. 6, 7.*

Fourthly, The Church is a Vineyard in respect of its Fertility, bearing much fruit, and best fruit: This calls upon us to be fruitful, and that in the best kind: Christianity is no barren Profession, it will be doing. What *Pliny* speaks of the nature of the Vine, that rather than her life she will be alwaies bearing; the same may be said of every good Christian, He is never well but when he is doing good; It is the delight, and joy of his Soul, to be rich in good works, and full of good fruits; to see his heart and life loaden with fruits of the best kind; as Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodnesse, Faith, Meeknesse, Temperance, and such like fruits of the Spirit: Of which fruitfullnesse, we shall speak shortly more fully.

Fifthly, As the Church is resembled to a Vineyard in respect of the Order that is in it; so it calls upon us who profess our selves Members thereof, to walk orderly. The want of this the Apostle sharply reproveth in Professors, *1 Thes. 5. 14.* and *2 Thes. 3. 6, 11.* And such are they

First, Who live without a Calling, and have no special settled course of life, wherein they may employ their Gifts, and Time, for their own and the Churches good.

Secondly, Such as are dissolute and negligent in their Vocations, and Callings: these the Apostle terms *disorderly Walkers*, and addresseth his speech especially unto, *2 Thes. 3. 7, 11.*

Thirdly, Such as intrude upon other mens Callings; these break their Ranks, and disorder all: *Let every one abide in that Calling whereunto he is called.* *1 Cor. 7. 20, 24.*

Fourthly, Such as transgress Ordinances, and Rules, established for the ordering of life and conversation, *2 Thes. 3. 10.* The Scripture giveth Rules of Direction how to carry ourselves in every station, and hath promised much peace and comfort to such

*Ruth. 3. 9.*

*Hos. 14. 7.*

*Psal. 101. 6, 7.*

*Plin. lib. 17. c. 22.*

*1 Tim. 6. 8. Gal. 5.*

*2 Thes. 5. 14.*

*2 Thes. 3. 6, 11. Mat. 20. 6.*

*1 Thes. 3. 7, 11.*

*1 Cor. 7. 20, 24.*

*2 Thes. 3. 10.*

Gal. 6. 16.

Prov. 30.

29: 30, 31.

Psal. 50.  
Ult.

Isa. 27. 6.

Gal. 5. 6.

1 Cor. 15.

10.

Psal. 119.

117.

John 15. 5.

Phi. 4. 13.

Eph. 6. 10.

such as walk according to Rule, Gal. 6. 16. *Agur* tells us of *three things that go well, yea four that are comely in going. A Lyon, which is strongest amongst Beasts, and turneth not away for any: A Grey bound: and a Hee Goat: and a King, against whom there is no rising up.* Prov. 30. 29, 30, 31. These patterns of comely going are propounded to this intent, that every one in his Place, and Calling, should have a special regard of orderly walking. When Magistrates know how to rule well, and Subjects to obey; Ministers to teach, and People to learn; Governours of Families to command, and Inferiours to observe their Precepts: there will a comeliness and beauty appear in the face of Church and State; but before, it cannot be expected. The world looks upon Ministers onely, as *Men in orders*, at least such as ought to be so. But it concerns you, as well as them, to walk orderly, if you expect Salvation.

Sixthly, In respect of the Churches Imbecillity, and Feebleness, it is like unto a Vineyard; It cannot support it self. And so it teacheth us not to trust to our own strength, but take hold on the strength of God, as we are willed. *Isa. 27. 6.* The Vine carryeth with it, her Key as well as her Bunch or Cluster, and with the Key, it windeth it self about its prop: Faith is the Key, and Love is the Cluster; every living Branch hath both. *Gal. 5. 6.* *By the Grace of God I am that I am* (saith the Apostle), there is his Key: And *his Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly then they all,* there was the Cluster, *1 Cor. 15. 10.* So *David, Hold thou me up and I shall be safe,* there was the Key: and *I will have respect unto thy Statutes continually,* there was the Cluster, *Psal. 119. 117.* Without Christ we can do nothing, as he telleth us *John 15. 5.* but being strengthened by him, and supported of him, we shall be enabled to do all things, *Phil. 4. 13.* Oh take heed of presuming on your own strength: *Peter* did so but a little, and you know how dangerously he fell. Bring the Key with you, wind your selves about the Prop that must uphold you: *Be strong in God, and in the power of his Might,* and fear not falling.

Seventhly, Where is the Church is a Vineyard in respect of Danger: Let all be stirred up in general to seek the safety and welfare



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welfare of it, by our prayers and pious endeavours: *Is it nothing to you, all ye that passe by? Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me:* Such is the Churches complaint at this day, and yet the ruines and breaches of Zion we behold with a regardlesse eye; wee look to our private wealth, and particular estates; and if it go well with us (as we think) we regard not much, how it goes with the Church of God: *Uriah* did not thus; *Nehemiah* did not so; *Daniel* did not so; These grieved, mourned, fasted, prayed, under the pressures of the Church, albeit they themselves, for their own personal concerns, were in peace. Questionless, there is no one Sin, for which God hath more a controversy with this Land, then this, That the Wants, and Mismes, and Breaches of his Vineyard are looked on with a regardlesse eye, and so little laid to heart: *I looked and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold,* *Isa. 63. 5; 6.* Can we think our selves lively Members of the Church, Branches of the true Vine, or that we have the Affections of God's Children in us, when we see the Vineyard of the Lord sustain losse, and be in hazard of waste, without any remorse? Let Magistrates use the power of the Sword; Ministers, of the Word; All, one the other, assist by their prayers, *Turn thou us to thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned: renew our daies as of old. Even so be it Lord, so be it.*

Lament. 1.  
12.

2 Sam. I. L.  
11.  
Neh. 1. 4. 5.  
Dan. 10. 2,  
3.

Isa. 63. 5. 6.

Lament. 5.  
21.

Jo. 16. 33.

Cyp. ad  
Marcel.

Heb. 12. 4.

More particularly, from the Dangers that God's Vineyard is liable continually unto; Every one within the Church Plants of this Vineyard, may be warned to expect trials, and prepare for them. *In the World (saith Christ) you shall have tribulation, or bruilings (for so the word is, John 16. 33.); Grievances, bruilings, pressures, expect, and look for: Ye are goodly branches of the true Vine (saith Cyprian). hinged with Clusters of ripe Grapes; Secular persecution is your treading, and pressing upon; Your Wine-press is the prison; and instead of Wine, your blood is drawn from you: The fairest Grapes are pressed, that they may yield the sweetest joyce. This World is not a Paradise, but a Purgatory, to the Godly. Ye have not yet resisted unto Blood; many of our Brethren have, and who knowes what we may do?*

John 15.

2.

Eighthly, In tha, as in a Vineyard so in the Church, all in it are not of it; Let us not content our selves with this, that we live within the pale, and are accounted members of the visible Church, that we have bin baptized, and so externally and sacramentally engrafted into the body of Christ; for there are two sorts of branches in the Vine as appears, *John 15. 2.* Some that would willingly be esteemed so, and are esteemed so to be, by reason of their outward Profession, and external engrafting into him, but they do not take; they bring forth no fruit; and these kind of branches soon dye, and admit of a *cutting off*, not having the sap of grace ministered unto them from the stock. Others, are bearing-branches, such as are both externally, and internally engrafted into Christ, and receive sap from him, and bring forth fruit in him: These shall live and abide for ever. And unlesse thou beest such a branch, engrafted into Christ, by a true and lively faith, and made one with him, as the Branch is with the Vine, Thou wilt perish eternally, for all thy outward Profession: How these may be known from the other, we shall shew you afterwards.

Ezek. 15.

Lastly, If the Church be as a Vineyard, despicable when it hath left bearing; Oh! then look unto your selves, that you cast not your leaves and become barren; Indeed there is no Vine but hath a Winter season, but still the sap remaines in the Root; and after it is cut, and hath bled, it recovers it self again, and brings forth abundantly as before; In case it do not, it is good for nothing but for the fire, as God shews *Ezekiel* in that Parable, *Ezek. 15.* Hast thou then bin forward, and fruitful in works of piety, mercy, &c. but now hast given over bearing? make use of God's corrections, bleed for thy provocations, and recover those things that are ready to dye in thee, for fear burning be thy end: And so much of the Uses which we may make of the *Allegory* in general, in that the Church is resembled to a Vineyard. Now something, of the *Unity* of it, and Gods *propriety* and Interest therein, would be said.

Text.

Vineyard.]

It was *One*; not Vineyards, *many*: And from hence we may conclude that,

Doff.

*The Church of Christ is one, and but one.*

My



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*My Dove my undefiled is but one* (saith Christ of his Church) and she the *only one of her Mother*. And yet there were *threescore Queens, and fourscore Concubines, and Virgins without number*, Cant. 6. 8, 9. As if Christ should say, There are a great number of people and Nations, of Churches and Assemblies, which challenge my name and love, and seem to plead a great Interest in me, and much worth in themselves; Yet thou, my true and chaste Spouse, pure and undefiled in the truth of my Doctrine, and the imputation of my holiness, art one in thy self, and the only one in my love; Thou art she, that, Jerusalem which is above us all, acknowledgeth for her only true and dear Daughter, and whom all Forraigne Assemblies which might seem to be Rivals with thee of this praise, do applaud and blesse in this estate, saying, *Blessed is this people whose God is their Lord*. And thus it is termed a *City* not *Cities*; A *Sheepfold*, not *Sheepfolds*; A *House*, not *Houses*; One *body* Mystical, not *many*; And it is an Article of our Faith to believe the *holy Catholique Church*, not Churches.

But we read of *Churches*: *Paul* was unknown by face (as he saith) unto the *Churches of Judea*, which were in Christ, Gal. 1. 22. So, *Revel. 1. 20*. The seven Candlesticks are the *seven Churches*, How then is the Church but one?

The multiplicity of Particular Churches do not hinder the unity of the Catholique; all these are but parts of it, as one tree that hath several arms and branches: Many stones make but one house, many houses one City, many Cities one Kingdom; so, many men one particular Congregation, many Congregations one visible Church, many Churches one Catholique One. Or as the Ocean-Sea is but one in it self, yet running by divers Countries and Coasts, hath the name according to the Coast it runs by; As the *English Sea*, the *Irish Sea*, the *German Sea*, &c. yet all but one Sea: So we distinguish of Churches, yet all is but one and the same, One Catholique Church and no more.

For, it hath one Head, and no more: Christ is the alone Head of his Church, and can have no other partner to share with him in this Dignity, *Ephes. 1. 22, & 2. 21*, *Colos. 1. 18, & 2. 19*. It is great arrogance in the Pope to Style himself, *Caput Ecclesie*,

Cant. 6. 8,  
9.

Dr. Hall  
Paraph. in  
loc.

Gal. 4. 24.

Psal. 144.

15.

Psal. 87. 3.

Joh. 10. 16.

1 Tim. 3.

15.

1 Cor. 12.

12.

Eph. 1. 23.

Object.

Gal. 1. 22.

Rev. 1. 20.

Resp.

Multa Ec-  
clesie una  
Ecclesia.

Aug.

Res.

Eph. 1. 22,

& 2. 21.

Colos. 1.

18, & 2. 19.

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the head of the Church; But they distinguish of Heads: There is a *Principal* and a *Ministerial* Head; the *Pope* is onely the *Ministerial*, *Christ* the *Principal*. But the Prerogative of the Head is not to serve and minister, but to command and govern. In different respects one may be said to have *divers heads*; for besides the *natural head* (which every man hath) he hath a *Spiritual Head* which is God, and a *Politick Head* which is the Sovereign Magistrate; but there is nothing in the World that can have *two Heads* of the *same respect and rank* but it is a Monster; and so should the Church be if it had both Christ and the Pope for Heads: Albeit one be above, and another under, (as they pretend); for that their *Headships* is of one and the same kind, *Spiritual*.

Secondly, It is One, for that all the godly are Mystically united into *one Body*. As we are knitt to the Head by Faith, so are we knitt one to another by Love and Charity. The members of the body are many, some have a higher place, and more honourable Office than others; yet *the Body is but one*. So is it in the Church, *Jew and Gentile, Bond Free, Male Female, all one in Christ*, Gal. 3. 28. This is lively testified and expressed in the Use of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, 1 Cor. 10. 17. *We being many, are one bread and one body*; many graines of wheat go to make one loaf, and many members make up the body of Christ: And as one body can have but one head, so one head but one body.

Thirdly, It is one in respect of the visible profession of the same service to God, holding the same entire Doctrine of Fundamental Faith and Religion, acknowledging one and the same God; believing in one and the same Father, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one Saviour and Mediator betwixt God and Man; having *one Hope, one Faith, one Baptisme, one Spirit to quicken us*, and one Law to guide and rule us, Ephes. 4. 4, 5. Now let us briefly Apply this.

*Basil* Reports with astonishment what he found by experience in his travails, that when in all Arts and Sciences, and Societies, he saw peace and agreement, yet onely in the Church of Christ, for which he died, he found discord.

Needs must their sin be great, who break the Churches unity

Ephes. 4.  
15, 16.  
Rom. 12.  
4, 5.  
1 Cor. 12.  
12, 13, 20.  
27.  
Gal. 3. 28.  
1 Cor. 10.  
17.

Ephes. 4.  
4, 5.

Asen. p.  
186.

Use. 1.

by



by their *heretical opinions*, and make a rent in her by *Schismatical distractions*. This was the disease of the Church of *Corinth*, she fell asunder into as many divisions, as her Church had Teachers, *1 Cor. 1. 12.* One side said, *I am of Paul*, they admired his plainness, his matter being powerful; and suspected *Apollo's* structure for the gawdy varnish: Another admires the powerful eloquence of *Apollo*, sleighting *St. Paul* as too flat and heavy, and his speech contemptible. A third sort are taken with *St. Peter's* draught; you are for *Paul*, and you for *Apollo*, and what was *Paul*? was he not a Persecutor of the Church of God, a Friend to the high Commission Court, one that carried Letters missive up and down to fetch them up (*whether men or women*) that professed Christ? And what is *Apollo*? had not he the best of his Divinity from *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, a Layman and a weak woman? There is *Cephas* a more powerful Preacher than either of them; He converted three thousand souls at one Sermon, and five thousand at another, (as the Report goes) he is the highest in my esteem. Well resolved, saith a fourth, but did not *Peter* curse, and swear, and deny his Master? Excuse me, I am neither for *Paul*, *Apollo*, nor *Cephas*, I am a Christian, and depend holy on Christ, I expect immediate Revelation from Him, and care for never a Preacher in the World, nor regard I to hear them. This was *Corinths* distemper, and is not the same ours? Whose heart doth not bleed within him, to behold what gathering there is into distinct and separate Churches? what engaging there is into parties, and factions in the behalf of their Leaders? But *is Christ divided* (saith the Apostle) is he one in *Paul*, and another in *Apollo*, another in *Cephas*? Is he not one and the same in all his Messengers? if so, why go you about to make a Schism, and a rent in the Church, and hazard your Interest in the head, by disjoyning your selves one from another.

*Dico & obsecro*, (saith *Chrysostome* &c.) I say, and protest that no man may plead ignorance, *Schism* in a Church, is as great a sin as *Heresie*: At the coming of Christ, there will be little difference put, betwixt such as have wounded the Church in her Head with *Heretical opinions*, or in her Members, by *Schismatical distractions*. However, that saying of *Augustine* concerning

*1 Cor. 1.*

*12.*

*Explained.*

*Act. 18. 21.*

*2 Cor. 10.*

*10.*

*Act. 9. 1, 2.*

*Act. 18. 26.*

*Act. 2. 41,*

*& 4. 4.*

*1 Cor. 1.*

*13.*

*In Ephes.*

*Rom. 11.*

concerning *Donatus* would be minded, *Persecutor non fregit crura, Donatus rupit Ecclesiam*, &c. The Souldiers would not break the legs of Christ, but *Donatus* teares the Church of Christ; As long as his body hung upon the Crosse, amongst Theeves and Malefactors, it remained whole; but when it was received by Christians it was rent, and torn into many parts and factions; And in so doing we deal worse with the body of Christ then the Jewish Souldiers did with his Garments, which they cast lots for, but made no division of.

Use. 2.

Ephes. 4. 2,  
3.

Prov. 13.  
10.

Rom. 12.  
13, 16.  
Greg.  
Epist. l. i. i.  
Math. 11.  
30.

Rom. 12.  
10.  
Phil. 2. 2, 3.  
Explained.

Seeing the Church is but one, let it be all our desires and endeavours to keep it one, and entire, according as we are exhorted by the Apostle, *Ephes. 4. 2, 3.* the means in the former *verse* he had prescribed, *with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love.* It is by pride that contention comes (saith Solomon). All ages have found this to be the Mother of Heresie and Schism: What bred Arrians and Donatists in ancient times, but a priding themselves in their own wits? And in these latter dayes, what is the cause of so much faction and fradition? but Pride of spirit, men having too high a conceit of their own worth: Meekness and lowliness of spirit would help this, *Rom. 12. 3, 16.* Gregory calls Humility *Radice pacis*, the Root of peace; Learn of me (saith Christ), *I am meek and lowly, and you shall have rest to your souls.*

Love and Charity likewise, makes much to unity. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, (saith the same Apostle, *Rom. 12. 10.*): So elsewhere he often and vehemently presseth it. *Phil. 2. 1, 2.* *If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of Love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercy fulfil you my joy, that you be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one mind;* As if he should say, Let me not intreat you only, but adjure you, as ever you would receive any benefit by his love and your own; if you have any sense of this spiritual communion which is between the Saints of God; if ye have any compassion on me and the Church of God; do you herein, make up the measure of my joy, in that you be peaceable and lovingly affected each to other: can any thing be spoken



spoken more pathetically, or perswasively? and whereto tended all this, but to the preservation of the Churches peace and unity? And, *Colos. 3. 14.* Love is charged upon us, above all those excellent graces there mentioned.

Where love is, there is a *Sympathy*, a fellow-feeling of our Brethrens miseries, and a pitying of their weaknesse; it causeth us to be alike affected as if we were in their case, *Heb. 13. 3.* And where love is, there is *Symphony*, a Harmony and content in believing of holy truths, and in the worship and service of the true God: as we read, *Acts 4. 32.* *The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and one soul*, though they were many in number, yet they were but one in soul; and being different in quality and condition, they differed not in faith and affection: They were (saith one) of one soul in regard of their Judgment, by the *unity of faith*; they were of one heart in regard of their Affections, by *union of Love*. So that, as St. *Ambrose* telleth us this spiritual Love and unity of the Faithful far excelleth the natural Love and Unity of Brethren. That hath in it, the resemblance and similitude of the Body onely; this declareth the *Unanimity*. That sometimes, is contentious; this alwayes peaceable; That into company refuseth a Brother, this into society admitteth a stranger. That divideth with heart burnings, things common amongst themselves; this communicateth with cheifnesse, things proper unto others. Thus did the Primitive Church receive her most happy beginning, from the concord of her Children. And for want of this, our Church (which was the fairest amongst Women, being united) is with the Levite's wife, being divided and cut asunder (as it is at this day) become the object of scorn and pity.

Want we motives to stir us up to keep the *Unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace*? The Apostle is not wanting, *Ephes. 4. 4, 5, 6.* A seven fold obligation lies upon us for preserving of it. First, The Church is but *one body*, (as we said before) and we are members of that body; Now as in the body of man, the members (though divers, and of divers offices) sweetly agree: So should it be with the Church, the Mystical body of Christ, *Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 12. 25, 27.* Me thinks this very consideration (should the Apostle bring no more) might prevaile with us, to forbear discord, and agree in one.

*Colos. 3. 14.*

*Heb. 13. 3.*

*Acts 4. 32.*

*Anima una, quoad Intellectum, per unitatem fidei: Cor unum, quoad Affectum, per unitatem Charitatis. Amb. Ser. 9. de unit. Trin. Tom. 5.*

*Cant. 1. 8.*

*Judg. 19. 29.*

*Ephes. 4. 4, —7.*

*Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 12. 25, 27.*

*Livy*

Decad. 1.  
Lib. 2.

*Lay* tells us a Story, That when the Common wealth of *Rome* was in great danger, through the broyles that arose between the Commons and Nobles of that City; The Senate sent *Menenius Agrippa* (a famous Orator) to pacify the People, who told them this Parable: The Members of the Body objected against the *Stomach*; that it devoured all, and yet lay idly and sluggishly in the midst of the Body, whilst the rest of the Members laboured full sore to feed it; thereupon the *Feet* refused to carry it, the *Hand* to put Meat to the Mouth, the *Mouth* to receive it: The *Stomach* being empty, the *Eye* began to be dimn, the *Hand* weak, the *Feet* feeble, all the Members grew faint, and the Body withered; so that at last they were all necessitated to grow friends with the *Stomach*, and be at one: By which Parable he quieted the people. And I could wish it might prevail with us: For as the health and safety of the Body depends upon the concord of the Parts, in the mutuall performance of their duties; so doth the welfare of the Church, when we shew our selves to be Members one of another.

1 Cor. 12.  
13.  
Eph. 2. 18.

Secondly, There is *one Spirit* which we are all partakers of, 1 Cor. 12. 13. Ephes. 2. 18. As in the naturall body there are not divers Souls, according to the diversity of Members; but one that gives life and motion to every Member, and quickens it: so is it in the body of Christ; and this Spirit is the Spirit of Union; it keeps all together, which else would shatter, and fall asunder: How can such think they have this Spirit, that live in discord? Hear what *St. Jude* saith of such, ver. 19. *They are sensuall, and have not the Spirit*: We need not load them with any other guilt than that. *Are you not carnall* (saith the Apostle to the contentious Corinthians, 1 Cor. 3. 3.)? Yes you are, and void of the Spirit; and *to be carnally minded is death*, Rom. 8. 6.

Jude 19.

1 Cor. 3. 3.  
Rom. 8. 6.

Gen. 25.  
24.

Thirdly, *One hope of our Calling*; that is, we are called unto one and the same Inheritance, which we all hope for, where we shall live sweetly and blessedly together; *Fall not out therefore by the way* (as *Joseph* said to his Brethren). It is shame, and pity, to see discord, and contention, between them that must for ever live together in peace and love: Indeed it is a sad sight to behold two Heirs, to be at daggers drawing, when



when the Inheritance cannot, nor shall be divided.

Fourthly, *One Lord*, which is our head Christ Jesus, whose Cognizance and Livery, is Love and Unity, *John 13. 35*. This Cognizance was so apparent in the Livery of Christians, who lived in the Primitive times, that the very Heathen knew a Christian by it: See (said they) *how they love one another*. And see, said the Christians of them, How they hate one another. Is it not a great dishonour to our Lord, and Master, that we cast off this Livery, to that now the very Heathen may say of us, as then Christians said of them, See what differences, what discords, are amongst them? Had we many Lords to serve, no wonder if we differed, (for *no man can serve two Masters*, much lesse many): but seeing we have but one Lord to obey, let us put *one shoulder* to his work.

*Joh. 13. 35.*

*Tertull.*

*Mat. 6. 24.*  
*Zeph. 3. 9.*

Fifthly, *One Faith*, which is the Soul of our Souls. One, whether we understand it of the *Doctrine of Faith*, which is believed, (called, in *Athanasius* his Confession, the Catholique Faith of all Christians); or, of the *Gift of Faith*, whereby we believe to Justification; which Grace is but one and the same, in all the Elect, *2 Pet. 1. 1.* and therefore called the *common Faith*, *Tit. 1. 4.* for that all Believers do, by one and the same Faith, believe in one and the same Christ: As there is but one Church in the Faith, so but one Faith in the Church; *Una fides specie, non una numero*, One Faith in nature, not one in number; One, *ratione Objecti*, which is Christ, not one *ratione Subjecti*; For every Believer hath his own Faith, *Hab. 2. 4.* And so there are as many Faiths as there are Believers: We may say of Faiths as of Faces, *Facies non omnibus una, Non diversa tamen*; One Light, many Raies; one Fountain, many Streams: This Faith being but one, we should therefore study to keep the unity of it, in the bond of Love; and so compose our Affections as that we may go our with one heart, and one mind, in the profession of it: *We can do nothing* (saith the Apostle) *against the truth but for the truth*, *2 Cor. 13. 8.* So long as there is found agreement in fundamental truths bewixt us, and dissenting Brethren, it shall be our wisdom to silence our disputes, and leave off wranglings about matters meerly notionall, and curious. But if in case this One Faith, which was once (for all) given to

*2 Pet. 1. 1.*  
*Tit. 1. 4.*

*Hab. 2. 4.*  
*Mar. 5. 34.*

*2 Cor. 13. 8.*

Jude v. 3.  
Ἐπαγωγὴ  
ἔστι.

Heb. 6. 2.  
Explained.

Tit. 3. 5.

*the Saints*, be resisted by gainfayers, then it is our duty to contend for it, as we are required, *Jud. ver. 3.* and conflict one after another (as the word signifies).

Sixthly, *One Baptism*, which is the Seal of the aforesaid Faith. The Apostle indeed elsewhere speaks of *Baptisms*, *Heb. 6. 2.* as if there were more than one; but the Apostle there, either puts *one number* for another, the Plural for the Singular (as we find it sometimes put), (so some conceive); Or because *certain times* were appointed for Baptism; as Easter, and Whitsontide, (so others); or, in regard of the *three Immersions* that were used in Baptism, to signify the Trinity, for the party baptized was wont to be three times dipped in the water, and therefore he might call it Baptisms or dippings; Or else by way of *Allusion* to the manifold washings, or Baptisms, under the Law, and so by Baptisms is meant that *Doctrine* which teacheth the cessation of them, and the use of one Baptizing only instituted by Christ, and so the rest abolished: Or else it is to be understood of the *Outward and Inward Washing* which the Schools call *Baptismum Fluminis & Fluminis*, The Baptism of Water, and of the Spirit; that *Washing of Regeneration*, and the *renewing of the holy Ghost*, *Tit. 3. 5.* The signification of both which, were taught the people in those times, that they might learn to put difference betwixt Baptism by the Minister (which an Hypocrite may have); and the Inward Baptism by the Spirit, which Christ bestoweth on his own Elect: And that they might be instructed in the nature of the Sacrament, and the signification thereof; and withall (it might be) of the Baptism of suffering affliction for the Gospel, whereunto the Sacrament of Baptism obligeth. The first and the last of these Expositions are most followed, but the latter best approved: However the Apostle speaks of Baptisms, not for that men were often to be baptized (as some would have it); For as we are born once, so baptized but once: They were but once circumcised under the Law, and we are but once to be baptized in time of the Gospel, nor that Christ instituted more Baptisms than one. And this one Baptism, wherein we are all baptized with water into the Name of One God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, should be a strong motive unto us to live in Unity, and godly Love; this being one use of Baptism (amongst



mongst others) to distinguish Christians from other Sects, and to knit the hearts of Christians together in a holy Communion, 1 Cor. 12, 13.

1 Cor. 12.  
13.

Seventhly, and Lastly, *One God and Father of all*, who above all things delighteth in the Unanimity of his Children. *Have we not all one Father* (saith *Malachy*)? Yes, we have; Why then dissent and jarr we? can we think it a matter pleasing unto God? Is it not one of those six things that God hates, *Discord amongst Brethren*? *Prov. 6. 19.* We are Brethren, both by the Father and Mother's side, and it is a shame for Brethren in nature to be separated in Affection; so much more sinful and shameful, for those whom Grace hath joyned; whom one heavenly Father, Faith, and Religion, hath coupled, to be be disinured, and make a breach in the Body of Christ: *Let there be no strife between me and thee* (saith *Abraham* to *Lot*), *for we are Brethren.* The very name of Brotherhood is an Argument of Unity, and hath a sweet violence to perswade; *Abraham* could find no such enforcing motive to peace, as it: *Moses* used the like Argument to those two Hebrews that were striving together, *Fall not out* (saith he) *for ye are Brethren*: And when the Servants of *Benhadad* observed the word *Brother* to come from the mouth of *Ahab*, they hastily laid hold on it, as an excellent preparative to the settling of those differences which were betwixt those two Princes, 1 King. 20. 33. But how little doth it prevail in these daies? We find that true which *Solomon* speaks (by woful experience), *A Brother offended is harder to be wonn then a strong City, and their contentions are like the Bars of a Castle*, *Prov. 18. 19.* The War that is betwixt spiritual Brethren is almost irreconcilable; our dissensions are like that [*μέγα χάσμα*] great Gulph, spoken in the Gospel, through which there is no passage of meeting. Let us be earnest with God, that he would shew his power in the compounding of them, it is he alone that must do do it, the *Wind of his Spirit* must blow upon these bones before they ever come together.

Mal. 2. 10.

Pro. 6. 19.

Gen. 13. 8.

Act. 7. 26.

1 King. 20.  
33.

Pro. 18. 19.

Luk. 16.  
26.  
Ezek. 37. 7.

To these seven Motives, used by the Apostle, tending to Unity, more might be brought, both from the good of it, and the ill or discord; But I have been somewhat prolix already,

in this Use, but the Usefulness thereof may excuse me; I have put a word or two to say more, and so I shall dismiss the Point.

Use 3.

1 Cor. 12.  
1 Cor. 3.  
21. 22.

If the Church be but One, One entire Body made up by the Collection and Aggregation of all the Faithfull, unto the Unity thereof; then it must follow for our comfort, that we may claim a right one in another, to care one for another, pray one for another, and have Christian Communion one with another, as the naturall Members of the Body have in the the Body: In all Church Ordinances, and Rites, we may claim an Interest for our Salvation; In the Gifts of all God's Ministers we have a Right and Title, and may, as occasion shall be offered, make use of them; The Priviledges of the Catholique Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and Life everlasting, all are ours; None of us that are of the Body, (neither Particular Persons, nor Particular Congregations), are to work as severall divided bodies, by themselves; but as parts conjoynd to the whole, all of us are (as in a shop, when one serves this Customer, another that) to bring to the common box, and in imploying of our gifts to aim at the good of the body, for every one within the Church hath such a Relation unto, and dependance upon the Church, as parts use to have in respect of the whole; which is full of comfort and encouragement (being well digested). But enough hath been said concerning this speciall property of the Vineyard's Unity. Now briefly of the Owner's peculiar Interest, and Propriety, therein. It is *His Vineyard*.

Quest.

How His? Is he the Owner and Possessor of no more but that? and the Figg-tree mentioned thereon growing?

Resp.

Psal. 24. 1.

*The whole Earth is the Lord's and the fullnesse thereof; the round World, and they that dwell therein* (saith the Psalmist, Psal. 24. 1.) and yet in regard of the Affection that he bears unto the Church, he doth in a manner count himself owner of nothing but this.

Doct.

Deu. 32. 9.

Exod. 19.

5. 6.

Isa. 46. 13.

Ezek. 7. 20.

*The Church is the peculiar Inheritance of the Lord, He doth more respect it than he doth all the World besides.*

*The Lord's Portion is his People, Jacob is the Lot of his Inheritance* (saith Moses), Deut 32. 9. they are his peculiar ones; Exod, 19. 5. 6. *His Glory*, Isa. 46. 13. *his Ornament*, Ezek;

7. 20.



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7. 20. *His Throne*, Jer. 4. 21. *His Diadem*, Isa. 62. 3. *His Hephzibah*, Isa. 62. 4. his onely delight is in her.

He hath chosen the n from the rest of the World; *Onely the Lord had a delight in thy Fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day*, said Moses to Israell. *Deut. 10. 15.*) The Lord hath chosen Zion, *he hath desired it for his Habitation* (saith David, *Psal. 132. 13, 14.*) *Ye are a chosen Generation* (saith Peter, *1 Epist. 2. 9.*) God choo'eth for his Love, and loves for his Choice; they are called His by *Election*.

He hath purchased his Inheritance with a great price; the whole World cost him not so much as his Church did, it was bought with blood; not as *Ahab*, who purchased *Naboth's Vineyard*, by the cruell shedding of the right owners blood, and unjust robbing of the right Possessor of it; but by giving the blood of his own Son to redeem it out of the hand of Justice, where it lay engaged, *1 Pet. 1. 8, 19.* hence it is termed *The people of his Purchase*, *1 Pet. 2. 9.* as comprehending all his gettings.

He hath entered into a League and Covenant with his Church, to become *their God*, and take them for *his People*, and so he hath not with the World besides, *Hos. 2. 13.* *1 Pet. 2. 10.* with Christ first was this Covenant of Grace and Mercy struck up, on our behalf, and so with us in him.

From hence, may all such take warning, as bear *ill Will to Zion*, that they be not too busy: The fingers of many itch to be pulling the Fence of Gods Vineyard, breaking down her Wall, robbing her Vines, yea, stubbing up both Roor and Branch, &c. But let all such *Roars of the Wood*, and *Foxes of the field*, remember that the Vineyard hath an Owner, who holds it as dear as the *Apple of his Eye*; *Israell is Holinesse unto the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase, all that devour him shall offend, evil shall come upon them* (saith the Lord, *Jer. 2. 3.*) God will bring his Action of Spoyl and Waste against all such, (and that is none of the cheapest Actions as some know) he will arrest them and arraint them at the Barr of his Justice, and plead against them, and in the end all such shall know, that however his Vineyard seems to lye awhile as unregarded, yet *Her Name is, Sought out, A City not forsaken.*

Jer. 4. 21.  
Isa. 6. 2, 3,

4.  
Reas. 1,

Deut. 10.  
15.  
Psal. 132. 13,  
14.  
1 Pet. 2. 9,

2,

1 King. 21.  
15.

1 Pet. 1. 18.  
19.  
1 Pet. 2. 9,

3.

Hos. 2. 13.  
1 Pet. 2. 10.

Use. 1.

Psal. 80.  
Zech. 2. 3.

Jer. 2. 3.

Isa. 62. 12.

And

Use 2.

And great comfort may from hence be raised, on the behalf of God's Church and Vineyard; for we may rest assured that he will never forsake his people, whom he hath chosen for himself: our sins may give scope to the violence of our Adversaries, so that God may for our unthankfullnesse and unfruitfullnesse, let us lye a while, as though we were neglected, yea rejected: he may let us out as it were, or mortgage us into the hands of our enemies, who may plow upon our backs, and *make long their furrows*, and harrow us to purpose, but to forsake us utterly that he will not: He gave a Law to his people, and established it for an Ordinance to his *Israel*, that none should (e'l away the Inheritance of his Fathers, (this, *Naboth* made conscience of) and if in case he had mortgaged any part of his Inheritance, and by reason of poverty he were not able to redeem it, yet at the end of fifty years it should return to him again, *Levit. 25. 10, 23, 28.* And shall we think that God will part with his Vineyard, his own Inheritance for ever? No, No, it cannot be; The gates of Hell shall never prevaile against it: Even so, *Return O Lord of Hosts we beseech thee, Look down from Heaven, and visit this Vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch which thou madst strong for thy self.*

Psal. 129.

3.

Levit. 25.

10, 23, 28.

Math. 16.

18.

Psal. 80.

Use 3.

Isa. 63. 19.

Psal. 50.

16.

Heb. 11.

16.

Jer. 31. 33.

And let every true member of the Church, take notice of this prerogative of theirs, and make their claime: *We are thine. O Lord: as for the wicked thou never bearest Rule over them: No wicked man can lay claime to God in respect of this Interest. To the wicked saith God what hast thou to do to take my name into thy mouth,* Psal. 50. 16. that is, to boast that I am thy God, seeing thou hatest Instruction, &c. Is it not a dishonour think you to God, to be counted the God of Drunkards, Swearers, Licentious Livers? What a God (with a mischief) is it that these men serve, said the *Indians*, beholding the cruelty of the *Spaniards*; But God is not ashamed to be called the God of Believers, *Heb. 11. 16.* It is indeed a debasing of himself thus to exalt them, but God is not ashamed of it, he makes over himself to us in a special manner, so as to be ours and take us for his own; For the Covenant of grace runs in this Tenour, *I will be their God and they shall be my people,* Jer. 31. 33. And thus will I say to them which were not my people, *Thou art my people,*



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ple, and they shall say, *I thou art my God*, Hof. 2. 23. God challenge us to be his, and we may challenge him to be ours, as did the Spouse in the Canticles, Chap. 2. 16, & 6. 2. *I am my well-beloveds, and my well beloved is mine.*

And hereof we have great cause to boast and glory, Rom. 5. 11. So did David, Plal. 18. 1, 2. *I will love thee O Lord my strength, The Lord is my Rock and my Fortresse and my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my Buckler, the horne of my Salvation, and my high Tower.* Nine several *Atys* there are in these two verses; The poor Christian can have no greater nor sounder ground of comfort, neither in Life, nor Death, then this that he is Gods, and God is his: All happinesse comes along with God. Upon this ground we may expect *Protection*, so David often, *I am thine, save me*: Who will not defend his own? and upon this ground we may expect *Provision*, and all necessary supplies; *He is worse then an Infidel* (such the Apostle) *that provides not for his own*: This alone is enough to make a man perfectly blessed, Psal. 33. 12, & 144. 15. Deut. 33. 29. Let Nabal (then) boast of his Sheep and Wine, *Shall I take my bread, my water, my flesh*, with a haughtinesse; let Nebuchadnezzar point to his great Pallace that he had built, and boast of the *might of his Power, and the greatnesse of his Majesty*: Let the Devil himself point to all the Kingdoms in the World, and say, *All these are mine*, yet all this is nothing to that a true Believer can say, *God is mine*; It may be thou hast no money, house, friend, to call thine on earth; yet cast thine eye upward, that Heaven, and the great God that dwelleth in that Heaven, thou mayst call thine: He is the *portion of thine Inheritance, thy lines are fallen into a pleasant place*, thou hast a goodly heritage, Psal. 16. 5, 6, 7. And so much of the Vineyard, now to the Plant.

*Had a Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyard.*

The Plant here mentioned, may be considered in its *Kind* and *Quality*. For *Kind* generically, a *Tree*; specifically a *Figg-Tree*. For *Quality*, no wild one but *planted*, and that in no barren soyle, but in a *Vineyard*, even in the Vineyard before spoken of, a rich and fertile soyle.

*Man is frequently resembled to a Tree in Scripture; so, Job*

Hof. 2. 23.

Cant. 2.  
16, & 6. 2.

Rom. 5.

11.  
Psal. 18.  
1, 2.

Psal. 119.

94.

Psal. 84.

11.

Psal. 5. 8.

1 Tim. 5. 8.

Psal. 33.

12, & 144.

15.

Deut. 33.

29.

1 Sam. 25.

16.

Dan. 4. 30.

Luk. 4. 8. 9.

Psal. 16. 5.

6, 7.

*Text.*

*Obs.*

## The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

19. 10. *Dan.* 4. 10, 11, 14, 20. *Isa.* 44. 23. *Jer.* 11. 19. *Ezek.* 17. 24. *Math.* 3. 10, & 7, 17, 18, 19, & 12, 33. The Resemblances are many; take we notice of some.

First, In respect of *Shape*, A Tree hath his Root, Trunk, or Body, Boughes, Branches, and smaller twiggs issuing from thence: Man's *Head* is his *Root*, his *Body* answereth the *Trunk* or *Stock* of a Tree, His *Armes* and *Legs* are his *boughes* and *branches*: His *Fingers* and *Toes* the smaller *twiggs*, Onely here is the difference, Man is *Arbor inversa*, a Tree turned upside down, (saith the Philosopher). For the Root or Head of a Tree standeth on the Earth, and extendeth it self towards Heaven in the stock, boughs, and branches of it; But man, (this Mystical Tree) hath his Head upwards, as his Root; and his Branches and Boughs grow downward to the Earth: to reach us (saith one) whence we have our sap, moisture, and nourishment, not from the earth below, as the Tree hath (which was *Esau's* blessing,) but from the dew of Heaven, which was the blessing of *Jacob*, *Gen.* 27. 28, 39.

Secondly, In respect of *Growth*, there is some good Resemblance. A Tree is first tender in the twigg, then stiff in the stock; and lastly, withered and doating in the age of it. So man, in his Childhood and Infancy is flexible, easily enclining to vertue or vice, as he is taught and instructed: like wax he is apt to receive any impression that shall be put upon him, and (as *Pliny* speaketh of the Firr-Tree) the nearer it is to the Root, the more smooth it is, and lesse knotty: So the nearer man is to Infancy and Childhood, the less sinful, and freest from vicious courses; but when he once comes to be stiffened, and confirmed in the strength of his stock, by man-age, then he waxeth more tough and violent in his courses, (as did *Rehoboam* and *Joash*): the elder we grow, usually the worse we are. *Adam* was worse in his breeches then he was before; so is it with his sinful posterity.

And as man growes thus in his youth, so he is drooping in his age. Let him be as strong as the Oake, as tall as the Cedar; as strait as the Pine-Tree, as green and flourishing as the Lawrel or Bay-Tree; when age seileth on him, his strength is weakened, his tallnesse abate, his straitnesse crooked, his greenesse

*Arist.*  
*Plat.*  
*Scalig.*

*Gen.* 27.  
28, 39.

*Prov.* 22. 6.

2 King.  
12. 14.  
2 Chron.  
24. 17.



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nessle withered. When *Isaac* waxed old, his sight waxed dim; when *David* waxed old, his naturall heat decayed; when *Barzillish* waxed old, his senses failed, and he became unserviceable. In old age, the *Keepers of the house wax feeble, the Pillars of the house faint*, as *Solomon* excellently sets it forth, *Eccles. 12. 2, — 7.* *At hi jam mortui sunt* (said *Milo*, looking upon his *Armes* when he saw the young *Champions* striving for *maisteries*).

Thirdly, There are *several sorts* and kinds of *Trees*; some greater then other, and some taller; some straiter, some broader; some younger, some elder; some barren, some fruitful; to is it amongst *Men*: All are not of the same Rank and *Quality*, some are of *high degree*, others *low*, *Psal. 62. 9.* Some exalted, others brought down: *Saul* was a tall Tree, *higher then others by the head and shoulders.* *Zachau* was a low Tree, lower then the people by head and shoulders; *Absolom* was a goodly green strait Tree, none in *Israel* to be compared with him for beauty; *Mephibosheth* was a tree lame and crooked from his Childhood, by a fall that he got out of his Nurse's arms: Some are fruitful, others unfruitful: Of which more hereafter.

Fourthly, In respect of *Outward State* and Condition the Resemblance holds. *High Trees* are subject to greatest dangers, being exposed to the violence of the winds, blasts of Lightning, the dints of Thunderbolts, and usually the higher the lesse fruitful: *Low Trees* are subject to the browsing of Beasts, trampling down with feet, and twenty other Annoyances; The Tree of a *middle Stature* is usually safest, and beareth the best fruit. Thus it is with *Man*: Those in high place lye open to the winds of alteration, to the lightnings of Dysasters, to the thunderings of envy and malice; *How are the mighty overthrown* (said *David* in his *Epitaph* for *Saul*.) Oh! *how are they fallen?* how often are they split with the weight and greatnesse of their own boughes? Those of low estate are trampled upon and scorned, their souls are *exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud*; where the hedge is lowest, every one will be trampling over. Who more wronged than the *Widdow* and *Fatherless*? The mean estate

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hath

Gen. 27. 1.  
1 King. 1.  
1.  
2 Sam. 19.  
34.  
Eccles. 12.  
2, — 7.

Psal. 62. 9.  
Jam. 1. 9.

1 Sam. 10.  
23.  
Luke 19. 3.  
2 Sam. 14.  
25.  
2 Sam. 4. 4.

2 Sam. 1.  
19.

Psal. 123.  
4.  
Psal. 10. 9.  
Prov. 19. 4.  
7. & 22. 22.  
Ila. 3. 25.

Prov. 30. 8.

Math. 11.

5.

1 Cor. 1.

26.

Plin. lib.

17. 6. 24.

2 Cor. 5. 1.

Heb. 6. 8.

Use.

Mark 8. 24.

Explained.

Chrys. Hom.

in Psal. 150.

hath alwayes bin found to be the best and safest; such are beneath envy, and above scorn. This, *Agur* prefers to either extreame, *Prov. 30. 8.* and of this Rank are those poor that receive the Gospel, or were Gospel-lized, *Math. 11. 5.* So, *1 Cor. 1. 26.* *Not many wise men according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called,* but those of lower rank and quality, yet not of the *lowest*; for experience makes it good, that those who are of the lowest rank of all, are most graceless.

Fifthly, Trees are *not without their diseases*, as *Pliny* sheweth, nor is man without his; The same Author tells us that, to that time, 300 several diseases were discovered, which man was subject unto: (Some Philosophers say 2000, and that there is 200, to which the very eye of man is incident). Sure I am, there is no Tree subject to so many diseases as the body of man is: Besides those *two worms* which lye at his Root, *Day* and *Night*, which will kill the Tree in the end, and be the destruction of it.

Lastly, In respect of the *Use*, Man may be resembled unto a Tree; some Trees are for building, others for burning, being once felled: So it is with all mankind, being felled by death; some are for the building up of *that house which is not made with hands*, *2 Cor. 5. 1.* others for fewel in Hell, *their end is to be burned*, *Heb. 6. 8.* Other Resemblances we might acquaint you with, but I must observe measure; Let not this that hath bin said be passed over without some usefull Application.

We read, *Mark 8. 24.* that when the Blind-man began to recover his sight, he saw *men walking like trees*, that is, (saith *Beda*) he saw the formes of men, but by reason of the dimnesse of his sight, he could not discern any lineaments of their bodies; As if he should say, I see a weak and confused glimmering of men, which seemeth to me rather trees then men.

This (say some) is not without a Mystery; such is man's blindness, that we look no otherwise upon men, then we use to do upon trees: This man we commend for his strength, another for his stature, a third for his spreading branches; and thereupon saith *Chrysostome*, if thou seest a goodly tall man do not admire him, for trees also are of a great tallnesse; and if thou seest a man great in wordly estate, do not gaze upon him, it is

but



but worldly greatnesse that is in him : But I may safely say, that he is blinder then that blind man, who doth not see himse f (in some sense,) and others likewise, walking like trees on Earth. Thou art now tall and high, in a prosperous state and condition, green and flourishing ; be not secure, thou knowest not how soon thy top may be taken off, thy goodly branches shred and lopped, thy trunk and body felled by the Axe of Death (which it may be some long for, that they may gather some of the chips that flye from thee at that time). Art thou of a low condition, and mean rank, yet thou art a Tree and must prepare for Winter stormes and alterations : *No man continueth at one stay, in the midst of Life we are in Death* : many of those violent storms which taller trees do meet withall, thou mayst escape ; but all thou canst not, whilst thou hast thy growing and abiding on the Earth : *Man that is born of a Woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of trouble.*

Job 14.3.

Thou hast now the favour of Great of men, Princes and Potentates of the World, in whom thou trustest, under whose shadow thou refreshest thy self, and in whose boughes thou buildest thy nest ; yet remember these are but Trees, their leaves will fade, and they themselves must give way to the stroak of Death, and what becomes then of all the Birds Nests that were built in their Branches ? *Dan. 4. 14.* And this is the very Argument that *David* bringeth to dissuade from trusting to Worldey greatnesse, *their breath departeth, and they returning to their Earth, all their thoughts perish* : It may be, thoughts they had of doing thee good, but all comes to nothing, they dye with them.

Dan. 4. 14.

Psal. 146.  
3. 4.

In short, remember what you read, *Jonah 4. 6.* God by his power and providence, raised on the sudden a little tree out of the ground, in the shadow whereof *Jonah* took exceeding delight and pleasure, for that with the leaves thereof he was defended from the scorching heat of the Sun ; but the joy he took therein lasted not long, for by the morrow-morning, the next day, the life of that green plant was destroyed by a little gnawing worme, so that it proved dry and withered, and his delightful shadow vanished. What kind of Tree that was, we will not dispute ? It hath bin done by some Learned Expositors to

Jonah 4. 6.

Abbot on  
Jon. Lect.  
48.

King. on  
Jon. Lett.  
45.

Eth. 1. 3.  
4.  
Dan. 4. 30.  
Isa. 39. 2.  
Luke 12.  
18.

Dr. John  
White sen.  
at the Spit-  
tle.

Job 24.  
20.

Text.

Judg. 9. 10.

good purpose, albeit, as one of them saith, unlesse there be some second *Adam*, to speak his mind, or another *Solomon* who was able to speak of the Trees, from the Cedar to the Hysop, the controversie will not be ended: (Be it what it was) I onely allude unto it. There is no man but hath his tree, or gourd; something in the shadow whereof he solaceth himself, as *Ahasuerus* did in his Princes and Servants, and the riches of his glorious Kingdom. *Nebuchadnezzar* in his goodly Buildings; *Hezekiah* in his silver, and gold, and spices, in the house of his Armour and Treasuries: The rich fool (mentioned in the Gospel) in his great Crops and spacious Barnes; But they forget the worme, some messenger of the Lord or other; either sicknesse, or bands, or death, which will smite this Tree, and give it a mortal stroke, as if a workman had come with his Axe to fell it, and lay it on the ground. In that Tree or Ivie (saith a very Learned Divine, speaking to rich men) behold all your State, or Riches; Let the greatnesse and pleasure of your mind be the greennesse of it; Let the encrease of your wealth be compared to the growing of it; Let your Tenants, and Children, and Followers, be the leaves of it; Let your peace and contentment that you take there, be as the shadow: but then again, remember the withering of this Tree; the worme that bites it, is death, the fading of it, is the decay of your estates, when you shall be spoyled of all you took pleasure in: The winde that smote *Jonahs* his head, is the misfortune that may blow upon you; and his grief is the sudden astonishment of mind that shall rake you, when all this comes: The like may be said of all other worldly delights, which are but the shadow of that Tree which shall be broken, or blasted: Thus much in the general, as it was a Tree: let us now take a more particular notice what kind of Tree it was, and of what quality. For Kind it was,

*A Figg-Tree.*]

It was no ordinary nor trivial Tree, but of a noble and generous kind (called upon by other Trees to be King over them) and brought forth sweet and delicious fruit, *Judg. 9. 10.* By which *Figg-Tree* the Jewish Synagogue is especially meant, and to them in a more strict sense it is to be applyed, but *Communi-ratione*, in a general consideration, every Christian Congregation,

yea,



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yea, every individuall person of such a Congregation is intended, as being concerned therein.

Why a Figg-tree should be mentioned, rather then any other Tree, some Reasons may be rendred, as this in generall; The Figg-tree was very common in *Judea*, and frequently planted in their Vineyards, for that the Vine delighteth much in its neighbourhood and shade; and thence is it that we so frequently find them joyned together in the Scripture, *Deut. 8. 8. 1 King. 4. 25. Psal. 105. 33. Joel. 1. 7. & 2. 22. Amos 4. 9. Hag. 1. 19.*

*Mald. in loc.*

More particularly, *In reference to the Synagogue of the Jews*, and that State; The Figg-tree, above other Trees, did best set forth their condition. The Figg-tree is a *succulent Plant* full of leavs and luxuriant Branches; so did that Nation come out, and spend its sapp in outward Observations and Ceremonies, contenting it self with the fair leavs of outward profession, crying out, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, drawing near with their Lips *when their Hearts were farr off.*

*Barvard. in loc.*

*Jer. 7. 4.  
Isa. 29. 13.  
Mat. 15. 9.*

Again, The Figg-tree is the *first that buddeth*, but the last whose fruit is ripe; The Jews budded long before the Gentiles, (and it is to be prayed for, that the time of their ripe fruit may be hastned); but the fullnesse of the Gentiles must come in, before their ripening can be expected, as the Apostle shews, *Rom. 11. 25, 26.* As yet there is an emptinesse amongst the Gentiles, both in regard of number, and in respect of Grace (which last emptinesse is a very great impediment to the calling of the Jews): but when the fulnesse of the one, shall be come in, and the number of converted Gentiles made up (which assuredly shall be), then shall follow a generall conversion of the other; the whole body of the Jews in geneaall, (albeit not every severall and singular person) shall be received to grace and salvation. This is a Mystery, and of us not sufficiently understood: how and when these things shall be, God only knows (saith *Origen*) let that satisfy; onely let all further their ripening, by earnest prayers and speedy repentance, for those Sins which have been hitherto Barrs and Obstacles to hinder it.

*Rom. 11.  
25, 26.*

*Parr his  
Comment  
on Rom.  
11. 15.*

In Reference to the Christian Church, under the New Testament, the Figg tree is named in respect of sundry properties, wherein it doth hold resemblance.

First, The Figg-tree is *full of sappy and moisture*, it is the most juicefull of any tree, the Root of it doth abundantly feed it; so doth Christ his Church, he is the Root of it, and on the Root depends the firm standing thereof, and the life of every branch; from this Root we have our radicall moisture, *from his fullnesse we derive Grace, and Grace for Grace, John 1. 16.* (or Grace upon Grace), that is, a daily encrease of Graces, one after another; thence it is, that our leavs shall not wither, but alwaies remaine green; we shall not see *when heat commeth, nor be carefull in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit, Jer. 17. 8.*

Isa. 53.  
Ephes. 1. 3.  
23.  
Col. 1. 19.  
& 2. 3. 9.  
John 1. 16.  
Psal. 1. 3.  
Jer. 17. 8.

Secondly, The Figg-tree is *fruitfull above other Trees*; It hath fruit one under another, insomuch that one Figg thrusts off another, through its abundance: The Egyptian Figg-tree (saith *Salinus*) bears fruit seven times in a year, pull off one Figg, and another breaks forth in the place thereof, very shortly after; So fruitfull is the Church of God, and every sound Member of it, they are *filled with the fruits of righteousness, Philip. 1. 11.* ever bearing, *being full of Mercy and good fruits, James 3. 7.* they are fruitfull all over, as one said of *Nehemiah*, in that he never rested from doing good to his people.

Phil. 1. 11.  
James 3. 7.

Thirdly, The Fruit of the Figg-tree is *a most delicious fruit*: Shall I leave *my sweetnesse* said the Figg-tree, *Judg. 9. 11*? And such is the fruit of every good Christian, acceptable and pleasing both to God and man: What the Apostle speaks of the work of Charity, *Philip. 4. 8. Heb. 13. 16.* may be said of every other Gift and Grace, *it is an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing unto God*; we are a *sweet Savour unto God* (saith the Apostle). The fruits of our Graces are God's dainties, *Cant. 6. 2.*

Phil. 4. 8.  
Heb. 13. 16.  
2 Cor. 2. 15.  
Cant. 6. 2.

Fourthly, The Figg-Tree is *forward in putting forth*, it foretells a Summer as our Saviour shews, *Mat. 24. 32.* Gods people are a *willing People, Psal. 110. 3.* Forward to every good work, that God requires to be done. *Gal. 1. 16. 2 Cor.*

Mat. 24. 32.  
Pla. 110. 3.  
Gal. 1. 16.  
2 Cor. 8. 10  
& 9. 2.



8. 10. & 9. 2. even in this sense the godly may be said to be *Primitia Dei*, the first fruits of God; And this their forwardnesse promisseth a Summer; it brings a blessing upon a Nation.

Jam. 1. 18.

Fifthly, The Figg-Tree *makes not so glorious a shew* as do other Trees, it neither blooms nor blossoms and yet bears abundantly: so is it with the sound Christian, he makes not that shew that the Hypocrite doth, but he is more fruitful, *Mat. 6. 3, 4, 6. Luk. 18. 11, 12, 13, 14.* The Harlot exceeds the chaste Matron in gawdy Attire, as the Church of *Rome* doth ours.

Mat. 6. 3,  
4. 6.  
Luk. 18. 11,  
12. 13, 14.

Sixthly, The Figg-tree best *bears the brunt of Winter Storms*, and is freest from Summer's thunder (saith *Pliny*) that never strikes it: Sure it is, that the godly Christian is best armed for hard weather, and best enabled to go through variety of conditions, *Phil. 4. 12, 13.* Nor do the Thunderbolts of an angry God ever strike him: that Thunder and Lightning which comes from the Throne comes through the Rainbow, the Covenant of Grace and Mercy, before ever they come at him, *Revel. 4. 5.*

Phil. 4. 12,  
13.

Rev. 4. 5.

Seventhly, Amongst all Trees there is none whose *Leaf doth so much resemble the Hand of a man* as doth the Figg-tree's: The Leaf of the Asp resembles the Tongue, but the Leaf of the Figg tree, *Man's Hand*. Christianity sets us to work, it stands not in a verbal Profession, but in action, *Mat. 21. 28. John 13. 17. Jam. 1. 22.*

Mat. 21. 28.  
Joh. 13. 17.  
Jam. 1. 22.

Lastly, (For I will not presse the Resemblance too farr); The Figg-tree hath such *a vertue in it*, saith *Plutarch*, that if a wild Bull be tyed unto it, for a small time, it will become tame and tractable, albeit it were never so fierce and fell before; In this a Christian is like a Figg-tree; if he cannot tame the fierce nature of another, (which notwithstanding he sometimes doth, by his presence and pious life), yet he can tame himself, and, through the power of God's blessed Spirit, subdue the unruly passions of his Soul; of angry and revengefull he becomes meek and gentle, &c. and such was foretold should be the fruits of Christs Kingdom under the Gospel, *Isa. 11. 6, 7, 8, 9.* I shall carry the Resemblance no farther, that which hath been

Plut. Symp.  
lib. 6.

Isa. 11. 6,  
10.

said

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said is enough to shew the fitnessse of the Resemblance, and why the Christian should be likened to a Figg Tree above all other Trees.

In that the Jewish Synagogue of old, and every Christian Congregation now, is Resembled to a Figg-Tree, and not to the strong Oake, tall Elme, smooth Ash, or any other fruitless Tree, it may teach us that,

*Those Trees wherewith God furnisheth his Vineyard, are of a fruitful kind, No barren, but bearing Trees are: for his use and service.*

Doct.

A Christian, saith *Bernard*, of all Creatures is resembled to a Lamb, of all Birds to a Dove, of all Flowers to a Rose and Lyllie, and of all Trees to a Vine and Figg-Tree. Indeed we shall seldome or never read in Scripture, that the Church or any lively member of it, is compared to any other Tree then those that are of a Fruitful kind. *He shall be like a Tree planted by the Rivers of water* (saith *David*) *which bringeth forth fruit in due season*, Psal. 1.3, *I am like a green Olive tree in the house of God*, saith the same Prophet, speaking of himself, Psal. 52.8. and such as are Righteous he relembles to the Palm or Date tree, and to the Cedars in *Lebaxon*, Psal. 92.12. which *Pliny* tells us are very fruitful: So, *Jer. 11. 16, & 17, 8. Ezek. 47. 12. John 15. 1, 2.*

The *Arke of Noah* was a type and figure of the Church, and it was not without a Mystery that God commanded *Noah* to make it, not of unfruitful but fruitful Trees, of Gopher wood, which some conceive to be the Turpentine Tree, which bears a berry. Others, the most excellent kind of Cedar; And so that other Ark which was a Testimony of his presence, must be made of *Shittim wood*, which *Varablus* and *Junius* understood to be the fruitfullest amongst all Cedars: Trees of an unfruitful kind are not for God's house and building. Let not this Observation passe without some profitable Use.

The Heathens of old were Idolatrous, in multiplying gods to themselves, even to the number of thirty thousand, (saith *Hesiod*) whatever they best liked, that they created a god, and so of whatever they most feared; Of a Clap of Thunder they made a *Jupiter*, of a Tempest at Sea they made a *Neptune*, of an

Earth-

Psal. 1. 3.

Psal. 52. 8.

Psal. 92.

12.

Jer. 11. 16,

& 17, 8.

Ezek. 47.

12.

John 15.

1, 2.

Gen. 6. 14.

Exod. 25.

10.

Use.



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*Earth-quake* they made a *Pluto*, &c. And to these their created gods, they erected Temples, Altars, and consecrated the goodlyest, and fairest Trees that they met withall : which ancient practise of dedicating this, and that kind of Tree, to several gods as proper and peculiar to them, was alwayes observed, (saith *Pliny*) and yet remaineth to this day : Thence *Lucian* took occasion to deride the practise of those times, feigning their Idol-gods to sit in Parliament, and every one making choyce of that Tree which he most fancied; *Jupiter* makes choyce of the Oake for its strength, *Apollo* of the Bay Tree for its greenness, *Neptune* of the *Poplar* for its length, *Juno* of the *Eglantine* for its sweetness, *Venus* of the Myrtle Tree for its beauty. *Minerva* sitting by, demanded of her Father *Jupiter*, what might be the reason, that seeing there were so many fruitful Trees, they all made choyce of those Trees which were fruitlesse; he answered her, *Ne videamur fructu honorẽ vendere*, that we may not be thought to chaffer our honour away for fruit; well, said *Minerva*, do you what you please, I, for my part, make choyce of the Olive for its fatnesse and fruitfulness; All commended her choyce, and were ashamed at their own folly. This you'll say is but a fiction; and it is no other, but it discovered the folly of men of that generation, and so it may do of ours: In elections and choyses, fruitful Trees are least of all regarded. The Ambitious he seeks after unprofitable honour, high place, Rule and Government, and would be advanced above the rest of his Brethren, he affects the Cypress for its tallnesse (A Tree that great men much esteeme of, and nourish in their walkes, but it is hardly made to grow); and when it is come up, the fruit is good for nothing, the Leavs of it are bitter, the Scent strong, neither is the shade thereof wholesome. The young Gallant is for the double-coloured Poplar, all for forme and complement : Oh! there is much of a Gentleman in that, the leaves of this Tree are soft, and full of down, which soon flies away like the down of the Thistle into the Aire, this Tree is an Emblem of Dissimulation; The flattering Courtier likes well the clasping Ivie, which yet is an enemy to all Trees and Plants, it undermineth walls, and is good onely to harbour Serpents, and venomous Creatures; insomuch that *Pliny* wonders it should be honoured by any, or counted of any worth;

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*Plin. Lib.*  
12. c. 1.

*Plin. Lib.*  
16. c. 33.

1 King 12.  
8.

*Plin. Lib.*  
16. c. 13.

1 Sam. 16.  
6.

Verf. 7.

*Use 2.*

*B. B. Hall.*

*Object.*

*Resp.*

and yet Heathen Emperours have used to make them Garlands of it, and weare them on their Heads: *Rehoboam* too much affected these Ivie codd's, 1 *King*. 12. 8. And it is the fault of greatnesse. The covetous worldling prefers the Ash to all other Trees, he loves to beare the Keyes, and delight in being the Jaylor of his wealth. The Body and bulk of this Tree is hard and tough, and the leaves unwholesome to any Beast that doth not chew the cudd: In short, some choose for beauty, some for sweetnesse, some for greatnesse, some for greennesse; but where is He or She that makes *Minerva's* choyce, to choose for fruitfulness? As *Samuel* said of the Sons of *Ishai* (one having a goodly stature, another a goodly countenance) *Surely now the Lord's anointed is before me*; So we think of these goodly and tall Trees, (but fruitlesse in grace) if Honour comes, Wealth comes, Beauty comes, &c. This is the anoynted of the Lord, this must be he. But *God seeth not as man seeth*; man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart, as was told *Samuel*.

And seeing (as we have heard in the former Doctrine) we are all of us (one and other) Trees, either fruitful or fruitlesse, it concerns us nearly to see that we be of a bearing kind. Trees that are not for fruit, will be for fire, (as hereafter in due place God assisting you shall hear). Thou mayst be a tall Elme, a sturdy Oake, a fast-growing Willow, a sappie Sycamore, and be suffered to grow in the Fields and Forrests, in the Ditches and Hedgerows of the World; you may spread far, and shoot up fast; shade well, and shew fair: but if you be barren, and not of a fruitful kind, you are not for the Vineyard of the Lord; there growes none but Vines, and Figg-Trees; Olives, and Pomegranate.

But are not all that come from the Loynes of *Adam*, of a fruitful kind and apt to bear?

They are so: But man is to be considered in a three-fold estate, 1. In the state of his Integrity, 2. of Corruption, 3. of Restauration.

The former is that estate wherein he was at first created, after the Image of God; in which estate he was perfectly happy, and had ability to do whatsoever his Creatour should require of him, and



and might be compared to those Trees of Paradise, richly laden at their first creation; alwayes bearing fruit, fresh, and ripe: and in that respect our blessed Saviour might curse that Figg-Tree which stood in the way fruitlesse, albeit the Text sayth, *the time of Figgs was not yet*, for that came through the sin of man, had he stood in his Integrity, Figgs would have bin upon it: but from this happy estate man soon fell.

Mark 11.  
13.

And now consider man as fallen in *Adam*, and so he is a Figg-Tree still, but a wild one, Look upon him *Philosophically, in genere Entis*, in respect of his natural endowments and abilities, as he is a reasonable Creature, hath an Immortal soul, endowed with Noble faculties of Understanding, Will, Memory, Conscience, &c. and is capable of Divine Objects, and hath a Body which is a fit Instrument for his soul to act by; Thus he stands yet as a Figg-Tree, and is of a bearing kind, for without these natural abilities, he were not capable of grace; were he a Stone or Logg, and wanted Reason, he were not to be wrought upon: What Philosophy often saith, *Nihil in Intellectu quod non prius in sensu*, till some Sense apprehend a thing, the Judgment cannot debate it, nor discourse it, may in some sence (saith a Learned Doctor) be said in Divinity, *Nihil in Gratia quod non prius in Natura*, there is nothing in grace, that was not first in nature; so far, as that grace alwayes finds nature, and natural faculties to work on: and though that nature be not disposed to receive grace when it comes, yet that nature and those faculties which may be so disposed by grace, are there before that grace comes. But if we consider man in this his lapsed estate *Theologically*, so he is but a wild Olive, and wild Figg-Tree; the Figgs which he bears are such as those which *Jeremiah* speaks of, *bitter, so bitter that no man can eat them*, his fruit is fruit unto death, nor doth God delight in any thing that he doth.

Dr. Donn.

Jer. 24. 2.  
Rom. 7. 5.

Consider man in a third estate, as he is restored to his first estate, and hath the Image of God again repaired in him: And so he is a Figg-Tree transplanted, taken out of old *Adam*, and planted into new Christ, who from the beginning was described unto us by the Tree of Life, *Gen. 2. 8. 9.* And so in the end of the New Testament, *Revel. 22. 2.* By whom a New life is put into us, and from whom we receive the sap of grace, so as

Gen. 2. 8. 9.  
Rev. 22. 2.

Rom. 7. 4.

to become fruitfull, and bring forth fruit unto God, and these are bearing and fruitful trees that God makes choyce of.

The Figg-Tree mentioned in my Text, was no wild one, it was *Ficum Plantatum*, a planted Figg-Tree; of which plantation we are now to speak, laying down this for our Position.

Dott.

*Those Trees which are of a fruitful kind, and wherewith God furnisheth his Vineyard, are planted Trees.*

The Church it self is termed *Gods plant*, Isa. 5. 7. and the *planting of the Lord*, Isa. 61. 3. and the *Branch of his planting*, Isa. 60. 21. and the godly are resembled to the *Tree that is planted*, Plal. 1. 3, & 92. 13. Jer. 17. 8.

Isa. 5. 7, &  
61. 3, &  
60. 21.

Plal. 1. 3,  
& 92. 13.  
Jer. 17. 8.

But there is a two-fold Plantation which we must take notice of. The one is *Terrestrial* and Earthly, The other is *Spiritual* and Heavenly: The *Terrestrial* planting of a People, is the bringing of them from one Country to another place there to settle, that they may encrease and multiply: of this planting the Psalmist is to be understood, Psal. 44. 2. *Thou didst drive out the Heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them.* So elsewhere, as, Psal. 80. 8, 5. And, Isa. 5. 2. Jer. 11. 17, & 12. 2. Ezek. 17. 5, 8, 9.

Psal. 44. 2,  
& 80. 8,

Isa. 5. 2.  
Jer. 11. 17,  
& 12. 2.

Ezek. 17. 5,  
8, 9.  
Colos. 1.  
13.

The *Spiritual* and Heavenly *Plantation* of a people, is the calling of them out from the World, and planting them into the Kingdome of Christ; of this speaks the Apostle, Colos. 1. 13. *He hath delivered you out of darknesse, and hath translated you into the Kingdome of his Son*, that is, unto his Church, his Mystical Body, into which we are by Baptism inserted and incorporated.

Now as the Church is distinguished, into *Visible* and *Invisible*, so may we distinguish of Plantation. A man may be actually planted and inserted into the visible, alone, which requireth no more then an External Profession of the true Faith; and so all in the Visible Church that call themselves Christians, and have bin baptized into the name of Christ, are planted into Christ, and his Body mystical; such belong to Christ, no otherwise then Ivie doth to that Tree unto which it externally adheres. And there is a planting into the Invisible, which besides the outward Profession, and common graces of the spirit, requires



requires the inward Spirit of Adoption: And this Distinction is grounded on, John 15. 2. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, &c.* There are some branches in him that bear not, that is, some that are like branches, but indeed are not; These are tyed onely unto him by a thread of outward Profession, and put into him by the outward Sacrament of Baptism, which causeth a faint and unprofitable fellowship with the Root, so as to furnish themselves with leaves, but not with fruit; There are other branches that are in him indeed, Internally ingrafted by a true and lively faith, which draweth sap from the Root, so as to bring forth not onely leaves, but fruit, and these *he purgeth, that they may bring forth more fruit.* This Figg-Tree mentioned in my Text, was not of this latter sort, but of the former. Let us apply this.

From hence we may be informed of the condition of every one, that is in the estate of Nature; no good fruits can be expected from such a Tree, as growes in its own proper soyle of corruption. *Do men gather Grapes of Thornes, or Figgs of Thistles? Even so every good Tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt Tree bringeth forth evil fruit; A good Tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good fruit,* Math. 17. 16, 17, 18. Good fruit proceeds not from natures production, but from a spiritual plantation; The Tree must first be good, before the fruit can be so; till then, all our works are not onely stained with sin (for so are the best works of the most regenerated person) but are also really and truly sins, and that both in their own nature, springing from a corrupt fountain, for that *which is born of the flesh is flesh*, John 3. 6. and also in Gods estimation, because he beholdeth them as out of Christ, in whom, and through whom alone, he is well pleased.

This is censured by them, of the latter Church of Rome, for a bloody sentence, *Crudelis est illa sententia*, saith a Popish Possiller; and the *Rhemists* advise, by all means, to beware of Heretique's comments on that place, (you know who they meant by Heretiques) who, (say they) go about to prove thereby that Heathens and Infidels sinned, in honouring of their Parents, relieving of the poor, fighting for their Country, killing of their grounds, and in all other works which they did, &c.

And

John 15. 2.

Use.

Math. 17.  
16, 17, 18.

John 3. 6.  
Mat. 3. 17.

*Ambr. Spil-  
dra,  
Rhem. An-  
not. on  
Rom. 14.  
23.*

Aug. cont.  
Julian lib.  
5. c. 3. et  
cont. du as  
Epist. Pel.  
ad Bonifac.  
lib. 3. c. 5.

And in teaching so, they teach truly, according to the plain evidence of Scripture, (as before you heard), and the judgment of the Ancients. *Austin's* judgment concerning such mens works, is well known, insomuch that they are inforced to confesse him to be, therein, for us. If a Heathen (saith he) shall cloath one that is naked, deliver him that is endangered, &c. is it not to be judged Sin, because it proceedeth not of Faith? Verily forasmuch as it proceedeth not of Faith, it is Sin: not because to cover the naked is Sin, in it self; but not to glory in God, of such a work, it is sinne: And this (saith he) none denyeth, but the wicked only. This he proveth; for that vertues must be defined, not by actions, but by the end; and likewise from the absurdity which otherwise would follow, that *an evill Tree should bring forth good fruit*, contrary to the saying of Christ before menioned.

Quoad Sub-  
stantiam o-  
peris.  
Quoad mo-  
dum.  
Rom. 2. 14.

Thus then we answer this cavill; A thing done may be good in the *Substance* of the work, and yet evill in the *Manner* of doing of it. The Substance of every moral Action is its Conformity with the Rule of goodnesse; that is, the Law; when that thing is done which is commanded by the Justice and Equity of the Law: and thus the Gentiles, which did by nature, *the things contained in the Law*, did good: And this *Moral goodnesse* in heathen men, was (without doubt) pleasing and acceptable unto God, so far forth as that he liked the work and approved of it, with that common allowance which he affords to all things, that bear any stamp of his own goodnesse. The *Circumstances* or *Manner* of the Action consists in the Efficient cause, or Person, that doth the work, and in the End or Scope that he proposeth to himself in the doing of it. In the *Person* is required *Sanctification*, that the work may be acceptable. And in the *End* a right *Intention*; for albeit a good Intention makes not an Action good, yet without a good Intention, the Action cannot be accepted as good, in God's sight: The Glory of God in Christ must be the Scope of all our Actions. And herein the Heathen failed, (as doth every other man in the State of Nature) their Persons were unholy, their consciences defiled, their purposes perverse and crooked, &c. And so, albeit the work they did was *Ethically* and *Morally*

Gen. 20. 6

Heb. 11. 4.

1 Cor. 10.  
31.

rally



rally good, in the sight of men, and to humane purposes; yet not being cloathed with all due circumstances, they were not *Theologically and Divinely good*, such as to be accepted of into any special favour of Grace; yea, so far were they from being so, that they were no better in God's account then glorious sins, and beautifull deformities, seemed they never so glorious in the eyes of men: the like is to be conceived of the works of every unregenerated Person.

Wherefore let every one, that would bring forth good fruit, and have some comfortable assurance of God's acceptance thereof, look to his planting. Let our gifts of Nature be never so great and excellent, yet *Vae soli*, Wo to Nature if she go alone: *Barach* durst not venture upon *Sisera* without *Deborah* went with him: no more may Nature venture upon any holy duty without Grace; nor shall wee be esteemed for any other Trees, then Barren, and fruitlesse, whilst we remain in our naturall soyl of Corruption: *Without me* (saith our Saviour) *you can do nothing*. The Bud of a good desire, the Blossome of a good resolution, and the Fruit of a good action, all proceeds from our spiritual plantation and ingrafting into Christ, who is that Root, from whence we have both sap and safety.

But we are all within the Vineyard, branches of God's own planting, we believe in Christ, professe his name, &c.

And it is a great mercy that we are so; many Priviledges belong unto us in being so, (as the Apostle speaketh of the Jews, *Rom*, 3. 2.): But that external Plantation may not be rested in; there are *Adulterina Plantationes*, Ballard Plants, (as Wisdom termeth them) such as are not planted with that spiritual and internal planting, before spoken of. Thy planting (it may be) is from man's Injunctions, or out of some By or Politique respect; If you do thus or thus, you are not *Cesar's* friend; Or by the Tradition of your Fathers, or else the enticing speech of some man's wisdom; humane perswasions effected it, and such as these are not Plants of the Father's planting: It affords no further strength then to produce Figg-leaves, meer formall and hypocritical Conformities, wherewith to cover our nakednesse (as *Adam* did after his fall). The *Father's* planting is into the state of Grace and Regeneration, and doth cause us to

*Splendida  
peccata.  
Aug.*

*Use 2.*

*Judg. 4. 8.*

*Joh. 15. 4.  
5.*

*Object.*

*Resp.*

*Rom. 3. 2.  
Wisd. 4. 9.*

*Joh. 19. 12.  
1 Pet. 1. 18.  
1 Cor. 2. 4.*

*Mat. 15. 13.*

par-

# The Figg-lesse Figg-Tree.

participate of the life, sap, and influence, of the Root; which kind of internal planting is that, and onely that, which will afford us true and solid comfort, without which the other will but subject men unto sorer condemnation, for despising Christ in his Word and Spirit, with whom, in their Baptism, they made so solemn a Covenant.

Use. 3.

You therefore that professe your selves to be branches of God's planting, look to it, that the fruits of your plantation be seen in your conversations: If Figgs be not found under your leaves, where shall we think to find them? shall we gather Figgs from Thistles? or can we think to find them sooner on the tree growing by the way-side than on the tree that is planted in the Vineyard of the Lord? And yet I read of ten Lepers that were cured by Christ of their Leprosy, and but one of them returned thanks, and he was a *Samaritan*, a stranger from the Commonwealth of *Israel*; God's own arable would not pay the Tythe, the wild Forrest did it: And St. *Paul* finds more kindnesse amongst Barbarians, than his own Countrymen; they receive him out of the Rain and Cold, when his own Nation shall whip him, and turn him into the Rain and Cold. Shall Mercy and Fidelity be without the Church, and falshood be found in it? shall Turks be given to good works, (as building of Temples, Colledges, Hospitals); and we who call our selves Christians and Believers spend our Zeal in defacing and demolishing of them? Shall they make conscience of their Vows, Promises, Dealings; and we that professe better, come short of them many paces? What a dishonour would this be to our Religion, shame to our Profession? And yet so it is, (to our shame be it spoken) that many of us, who have blessed means of direction and instruction, for the due ordering of our hearts and lives, (which the Heathen want,) may yet be sent to School to learn moral honesty of them, both in the detestation of grosse enormities, and in the conscionable practise of many vertues. Woe to such as give occasion to any to tell the World, that it is better to trust a Pagan than a Professor; and to have dealing with a Turk rather than with a Christian. I know not how any such can make their peace with that of our Saviour, *Unlesse your Righteousnesse shall exceed the Righteousnesse of the Scribes*

and

Luk. 17.  
16, 17.

Act. 18. 2.

Mat. 5. 20.



and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdome of Heaven. Unlesse we have a Righteousness that goes beyond theirs, how can we think to escape the nethermost Hell? if we exceed them in unrighteous, and unjust practises? But I will strike no longer on this sad string, we pass from the Figg-Tree's Plantation to its situation, *ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι αὐτοῦ.*

*In his Vineyard].*

That the Church is the Vineyard you have heard before; and in what respects it is so compared, here you see.

*The Church is Gods Nursery.* That is the onely soyle for his plants to thrive in.

*The Righteous shall flourish like a Palme Tree, and shall spread like a Cedar in Lebanon; such as be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God,* (saith David, Psal. 92.12,13.) The Church is Gods house, 1 Tim.3.15. there he delights to dwell, and there his exercises are observed, there are his Courts, and that is the soyle, the Orchard of his delight for his plants to flourish in, and that not for a time onely, but for ever: This is that *Sheepfold* into which the elect Gentiles were to be brought out of the wast Deserts of the World, upon their conversion to Christ, *John 10.16.* The fulness of them are to come in thither, *Rom. 11.25.* and such as God will have saved, he daily adds unto his Church, *Acts 2.47.* And in this respect is the Church Militant here on Earth, often compared to the *Kingdome of Heaven*, for that it is the inlett into it. *Per portam Ecclesia intramus in portam Paradisi,* (saith *Austin*).

The fruitfulness of any plant is improved principally by four helps. First, The fecundity of the soyle whereon it growes. 2ly, The kindly heat of the Sun, chearing it up with his influence. 3ly, The contribution of the Clouds towards it, with their dews and shows. 4ly, Gods blessing; without which, all the other are as nothing. All these requisites are in the Church, whereof the plants therein growing, partake in an ample manner.

The soyle it self is fat and fruitful. *Solomon had a Vineyard at Baal-Hamon, which he let out unto Keepers,* Cant.8.11. by which Vineyard (Myssically) the Universal Church is to be understood, Christ is the Solomon that owns it; The site of it at

N

Baal-

Text.

Doct.

Psal. 92.  
12,13.  
1 Tim. 3.  
15.  
Psal. 132.  
13, 14.  
Psal. 84.  
20.  
Cant. 4.  
13.  
John 10.  
16.  
Rom. 11.  
25.  
Acts 2.47.  
Math. 13.  
Aug. Serm.  
137. de  
Temp.  
Reas.

Cant.8.11.

*Dominus  
multitudi-  
nis.*

*Isa. 5. 1.*

*Isa. 2. 2.*

*Psal. 68.*

*15. 16.*

*Deut. 32.*

*14. 15.*

*Ezek. 39.*

*28.*

*Amos 4. 1.*

*Isa. 25. 6.*

*Semper in  
sole sua est  
Sylicus.  
Mal. 4. 2.  
Explained.*

*John 5. 21.*

*Psal. 119.*

*50. 93.*

*John 6. 63.*

*1 Cor. 15.*

*45.*

*Math. 23.*

*37.*

*Psal. 84.*

*11.*

*Psal. 17. 8.*

*& 36. 7. &*

*57. 1.*

*Cant. 2. 3.*

*Isa. 4. 6.*

*Baal-hamon*, that is, in a very fertile and fruitful place (what place soever it was) that was able by the heat of the Sun to bring forth store of wine, and a multitude of grapes unto the Owner: *Isaiah* terms it *Cornu filius Olei*, an horn of the Son of Oyl, *Chap. 5. 1.* Now by *horn*, the Hebrews understand strength and height; and by *Oyl*, plenty and fatnesse: we render the words in our translation, A very fruitful Hill, A Hill preferred to all Hills, *Isa. 2. 2.* The high hills of *Bashan* were not to be compared with it, *Psal. 68. 15, 16.* *Bashan*, was a very fat and fruitful mountain, the cattle that fed upon it were very fat and strong; but neither *Bashan* nor any other mountain on the Earth is comparable to mount *Zion* for fatnesse; albeit they leap and insult proudly, of their outward pomp and glory. In this mountaine (saith *Isaiah*) shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the Lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the Lees, well refined, *Isa. 25. 6.* Needs much that be a fruitful Soyl that affords such a Crop.

Secondly, The Sun doth alwayes shine upon it (as was said of *Rhodes*). To you that fear my name (saith God) the Sun of Righteousnesse shall arise with healing under his wings, &c. *Mal. 4. 2.* The beams of the Sun may be aptly resembled unto wings; because thereby the Sun doth stretch forth, and extend it self to the nourishing, fructifying, and quickening of all things; Now look as the light of the two first dayes was collected and placed in the body of the Sun, and so carryed about the World for the cherishing of things that are under it; so hath God collected, and placed all spirituall light in his Son, and from him it is conveyed unto the Church which is quickned by his word and spirit, as by a double beam that comes from him, or (to keep to the Metaphor used by the Prophets) which are his wings, under which his Church is both brooded and protected, *Math. 23. 37.* So, *Psal. 84. 11.* The Lord is both Sun and Shield; Look what the Sun is to the World, the same is God to his Church; And where shines this Sun, but in the Church? That is the *Goshens*, where this light is; and in the Ministry especially, it displayeth its beames. And as he is a Sun, so a Shield to shadow us and defend us against all stormes and tempests, that may annoy us, *Psal. 17. 8, & 36. 7, & 57. 1. Cant. 2. 3. Isa. 4. 8.*

Thirdly,



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

91

Thirdly, This soyle is a *well-watered soyle*, Ezek. 47. 1. — 13. What are these waters that run from under the *threshold of the Sanctuary*, but the graces of Gods spirir, and the sacred Scriptures? these are those streames which run through this Eden, and *make glad the City of God*; they cause admirable fruitfulness, inso-much, that on both sides of the River shall grow *all kind of fruitful Trees, whose leaf shall not fade, nor fruit faile*, Jer. 17. 8. Psal. 1. 3. The bigg-belly'd Clouds distill their showrs on this Earth, Deut. 32. 2. their dew falls on this *mount Hermon*, which furthereth her fruitfulness.

Lastly, whereas *Paul's planting*, and *Apolloe's watering* is nothing, without God's blessing, A blessing is promised, yea commanded to come *out of Zion*, Psal. 133. ult. that is, to fall upon the heads of those that are members of the Church: With abundance of blessings will he blest his Church and People, both for this present, and future life. And that we may not think this promise was peculiar to the Temple, or Tabernacle, or place of God's Ceremonial worship, (which had indeed some priviledges above our Temples) you shall find that it is spoken, of all places where God is worshipped: *In all places* (saith God) *where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will blesse thee*, Exod. 20. 24. And lest we might conceive, that it was a promise made onely to the Jewish Church, under the old Testament, and nothing belonging to us who live under the Gospel; Christ hath assured us, that *where two or three are gathered together in his Name*, that is, to worship him sincerely, *there will He be in the midst of them*, Math. 18. 20. there he will meet them with a blessing. In all these respects it appears that the Church of God is the onely soyl for plants to thrive in.

And being so, Have we not great cause to blesse God, for that the lot of our Inheritance is fallen in so good a soyle? and to sing with David, *The Lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage*? This was that *One thing* which he did with so much earnestnes desire of God, that he might dwell in God's house for ever, Psal. 24. 4. The happinesse of such, as have that priviledge, he doth highly magnifie and set forth, Psal. 84. 4. preferring a *door-keeper's place* in Gods house to all world-

Ezek. 47.  
1. — 13.

Psal. 46. 4.

Jer. 17. 8.  
Psal. 1. 3.  
Deut. 32. 2.

1 Cor. 3.  
6, 7.  
Psal. 133.  
9.

Exod. 20.  
24.  
Math. 18.  
20.

Use.

Psal. 16. 6.

Psal. 27. 4.

Psal. 24. 4.  
Psal. 84. 4.  
10.

Gen. 9. 27.

ly pomp and dignity, out of the bounds of the Church, *vers. 10.* It was not for nothing, that when *Noah* blest his Son *Japhet* for his filial affection, and goodness, in covering his nakedness, he prayed onely that God would perswade *Japhet* to dwell in the *Tents of Sem*, for in desiring that, he desired the salvation of him and his posterity. Out of the Church there is no salvation (ordinarily) to be had, but salvation is in it. The *Tree of Life* grew no where, but in the midst of Paradise: Nor is Christ to be found, nor life eternal to be had other where, than in the true Catholique Church of Christ: His promises are only made unto his Church; His Covenants only drawn up betwixt Him and the Church; to be out of the Church, is, to be *without the Promise, without the Covenant, without Christ, without God in the World*; and, without these, without happinesse, without Salvation.

Eph. 2. 12.

Object.

But the Papists say, that they are the *Catholique Church*, and that all others being out of their Church and communion, must needs perish eternally. *Schismatiques* and *Seperatists*, they say, that the true Church is amongst them, and them onely, and that all other are but limbs of Antichrist; false Churches, and not the true one.

Resp.

Indeed the Church of Christ (whereof we confidently averr that we are members) is crucified (as Christ the head thereof) betwixt two Theeves, *Papists* on the one hand, and *Schismatiques* on the other; and it stands us much upon, and is of great concernment, that we be able to justifie our standing, and that we are indeed the true Church of God, and that this is the true *grace of God wherein we stand.*

1 Pet. 5. 12.

Aug. de  
viti. Eccl.  
c. 2.

The safest, and onely infallible way, to find out the true Church is by the Scriptures, as *Austin* shews, The question is, saith he, (speaking of the *Donatists*, who held their heretical and particular faction to be the true Catholique Church) (as the Papists at this day do theirs) Where the Church should be; What then shall we do, shall we seek it in our own words, or in the words of our Lord Jesus? In my Judgment we ought rather to seek the Church in his own words, for that *He* is the truth, and knowes his own body.



Now we read, *John 4.22.* in that conference that was betwixt Christ and the Woman of *Samaria*, that our blessed Saviour thus determines that *Question*, which was betwixt the Jews and the Samaritans, *viz. Which was the true Church* of the two, and who had the true worship; *Ye worship ye know not what* (saith Christ), *we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews*; The reason that He brings to prove the Jewish worship, true, was this, They had the word of God amongst them, the doctrine of salvation giving them direction how to worship God savingly; and that by *salvation* there is meant the word of God, and the Ministry thereof appears, in that it was the chief Privilege which the Jew had above others, as appears, *Psal. 147. 19, 20. Rom. 3.2.* (and so is mentioned there by our Saviour) besides, it was that, whereby the Jews knew how to worship God aright, (else there had bin no consequence in this Reason, *We worship that we know, for salvation is of the Jews*). And Lastly, The salvation spoken of is that, which was to be derived from them to Gods people, of all Nations, the very same in effect with that of the Prophet *Isaiah, Chap. 2.3. The Law shall go from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*, before Christ's coming in the flesh; the Jews were the onely Church, and all that professed the true Religion of God, received it from them, and joyned themselves unto them; for to them pertained the giving of the Law, *Rom. 9.4.* After Christ's coming in the flesh, the Gospel was first Preached unto them, *Matth. 15. 24. Luke 24. 47. Acts 11. 19.* And though many rejected the word, yet many amongst them were the first that embraced it, *Rom. 1. 16. Acts 2. 41. 44.* And all Churches of the Gentiles gave special honour and respect unto the Church of the Jews, as to their Mother Church, *Rom. 15. 26.* and were grafted into that stock, *Rom. 11. 24.* So then we cannot doubt but, by *Salvation*, in that place the *Doctrine and means of salvation* must be meant; as it is in other places of Scripture, *Heb. 2. 5.* And from hence it is evident, that the Profession and Preaching of true Doctrine in all fundamental points, is the onely proper and certain note of a true Church.

They of the Roman Church give us many Notes, whereby the true Church may be known, (which they bring as Arguments

*John 4.22.*

*Psal. 147.  
19, 20.  
Rom. 3.2.*

*Isa. 2. 3.*

*Est. 8. 7.  
Rom. 9. 4.  
Matth. 15.  
24.  
Luke 24.  
47.  
Acts 11.  
19.  
Rom. 1. 16.  
Acts 2. 41.  
44.  
Rom. 15.  
26; & 11,  
24.*

*Heb. 2. 5.*

De notis  
Ecclesie.

Rom. 3. 2.

AAs 2. 42.  
47.

John 10. 4,  
27, & 8,  
30.  
Eph. 2. 19.

Vid. Bern-  
nard. a-  
gainst Se-  
paratists in  
80. page  
164.

to prove themselves to be the true Church, and no other) as Uni-  
versality, Antiquity, Succession, &c. to the number of fifteen  
are given by *Bellarmino*, (supposing to do that with number,  
which he could not do by weight): but Christ doth not deter-  
mine the question in the place before quoted (nor else where)  
by any of those marks, but by this Note, the *Doctrine of salva-  
tion*, which was amongst the people. It was a Church wherein  
salvation might be had, and therefore the true Church of Christ.  
This was the chief Badge, and Cognizance of the Old Church,  
whereby it was known to be the Church of God, *Rom. 3. 2.*  
And this is the Cognizance of the true Church under the Gos-  
pel, as appears, *Acts 2. 42, 47.* where the Holy Ghost gives an  
exact pattern of a true Visible Church, for all succeeding Ages to  
be examined by, and conformed unto, that (if our Itate and  
standing in the Church were questioned) true Believers might  
be able to justify themselves, and convince all false Churches  
whatsoever; And that, from the prime of the Primitive Church,  
(the first visible Church after our Saviour's Ascension) (and so a  
fit pattern for other Churches to be censured by). Where the  
word of God is soundly, and truly Preached, Sacraments ad-  
ministr'd, the Duties of Prayer to God, and Love to our Bre-  
thren, Religiously and conscionably practis'd, there is a true  
Visible Church wherein salvation is to be had; And for further  
confirmation of this, read *John 10. 4, 27, & 8, 30.* This  
mark (praised be God) is not wanting amongst us: We build up-  
on the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles; Christ him-  
self being the chief Corner-stone, *Ephes. 2. 19.* The word is truly  
and sincerely Preached to the conversion of many Souls; The  
Sacraments administr'd, the Duty of prayer to God, and Love  
to our Brethren (in some good measure) conscionably and religi-  
ously practis'd (notwithstanding saylings) and therefore we are  
the true Visible Church of God; which the Church of *Rome*  
wanting is not, neither can be.

Yea but (say the Separatists) your Assemblies are full of en-  
ormities; Discipline is wanting amongst you, many corrup-  
tions are in you; Your worship is polluted with mens writings,  
hinted-prayer, &c. You a Church (say they)? you are a limb  
of Antichrist.

We



We answer them, First, that there is nothing done in Gods publique worship amongst us, but it is done by the Institution and Ordinance of the Lord: It is his Ordinance that whensoever the Congregation assembl<sup>e</sup>th, pray<sup>r</sup> should be used; It is his Ordinance that his Word should be publickly Read: It is his Ordinance that his Word should be opened, and applyed in our publique Assemblies; It is his Ordinance that in our publickly Assemblies, Psalms should be sung; It is his Ordinance that the Sacraments should be administred, and that in the publique Assembly; And it is his Ordinance that the Minister should dismiss the Congregation with a blessing, as Scripture doth evidence.

Secondly, All *Corruptions* that are in a Church do not unchurch her; The *Ten Tribes*, after their defection, notwithstanding their grosse Corruptions and Idolatry, yet because they professed by circumcision, and other wayes the true *Jehovah*, they remained still a true Church, (though a very impure and imperfect Church,) and were still called the *People of God*, the *Beloved of God*, the *Children of the Living God*: So the state of the Jews was wonderfully corrupt in Christ's time, and yet salvation even at that time was from them, and they the true Church of God: the like might be shewed of the Church of *Corinth*, and the Churches of *Asia*; Great corruptions were to be found in them, and yet they were still the true Churches of Christ, (as we shewed you before, when we spake of the Properties of the Vineyard.)

Thirdly, Those may be esteemed Corruptions in a Church which are none at all. It is no corruption in the preaching of the word, to make use of the writings of men, so long as God's Word is made the Ground of all, the Touch stone of all, and the Judge to determine of all truth: Had this been so, the Apostles and Prophets themselves had corrupted the Word, in alledging the sayings of others, (yea, of Heathen Writers): *Daniel* recited the Decree of *Nebuchadnezar*, and the Decree of *Darius*, and the Edict of *Cyrus*, King of *Persia*: *St. Paul* alledged the Sentences of Heathen Poets; as of *Araus*, and of *Menander*, and of *Epimenides*: *St. Jude* alledgeth the Prophecy of *Enoch*, (which both *Augustine* & *Jerome*, with others of

our

1 Tim. 2.  
15. 2.  
Deut. 31.  
11, 12.  
Act. 13. 15.  
Act. 15. 21.  
Psalm. 95. 1.  
2.  
Mat. 26.  
30.  
Col. 3. 16.  
Mat. 3. 13.  
1 Cor. 11.  
22. 23.  
Numb. 6.  
23.  
Deut. 10.  
28. & 21. 5.  
1 Cor. 16.  
23.  
2 Cor. 13.  
14.  
Rom. 9. 25.  
26.  
1 King. 16.  
2.  
1 Cor. 1. 15.  
2.  
2 Cor. 12.  
20, 21.  
Rev. 2. & 3.

Dan. 4. &  
6.  
Ezra 1.  
Act. 17. 18.  
1 Cor. 15.  
33.  
Tit. 1. 12.

our latter Writers, conceive to be Apocryphal), Whilst humane Learning is made a Handmaid, to wait upon Lady Truth; it is no dishonour, but rather an honour to her.

Nor is it a corrupting of God's worship, to use stinted and sett forms of Prayer in his service. It is evident enough in Scripture, that the Church hath used, and might use them, in God's worship: In blessing the people it was enjoyned, *Numb.* 6. 23, 24. so at the setting forward of the Ark, *Numb.* 10. 35. and at the resting of it *Ver.* 26. Many of *David's* Plaimes were committed to the Church-Musicians to be sung, not onely as Meditations and Doctrines, for the Instruction of the Church, but as Prayers unto God; so *Psal.* 92. was penned for the Sabbath; and *Psal.* 102. a Prayer for the distressed. It is very probable that *St. John* taught his Disciples a sett-Form, *Luk.* 11. 1. and thereupon our Saviour prescribed to his Disciples a form of Prayer, not only to be to them, and the whole Church, a *Rule* and *Sampler*, according to which, all our prayers should be framed (as appears, *Math.* 6. 9.) but even for them to say, using the very words as appears, *Luk.* 11. 2. And it is evident that our blessed Saviour himself, prayed the same paayer, and used the same words in prayer, more than Once, *Mat.* 26. 42. *He used the same words* (saith the Evangelist), nor were they ever the worse for being often used. As for that which is objected, Of stinting the Spirit, and pinnioning the wings of the Dove; How is it more a tying of the Spirit up, than it is (to the Hearer) when the Speaker prayes his conceived prayers? for to the Hearer that Prayer is a stinted Prayer, and as a sett form to him; he must keep his mind intent to what is said by him that prayes. Secondly, Although there are a tye of words, yet there is not a tye and restraint of the Spirit; for the heart may be enlarged therein, and the largeness of the heart stands not so much in the variety of expression, as in the extent of the Affection; But the newness of his opinion, saith a Reverend Divine, is enough to discover the falshood of it.

Lastly, For that Discipline which they charge this Church of ours to be wanting in, and thence inferre that we are a false Church; It may be answered that we are not altogether without it, albeit we want that Discipline which they pretend. 2ly,

It

*Numb.* 6.  
23, 24.  
*Numb.* 10.  
35, 36.  
*Psal.* 92. tit.  
& 102. tit.

*Luke* 11. 1.

*Dr. Prest:*  
*Saints daily*  
*exercise.*  
*P.* 82.



It is an error to make Discipline so essential a property of the Church, as that that which is without it, is no true, but a false Church. That it is necessary for the beauty and *well being* of the Church, we willingly grant; but that it is so essentially and inseparably necessary to the truth and *being* of the Church; cannot be proved by evidence of Scripture. Is a household having true matter and forme, and essential properties; a false household, because Government is wanting? or for that they in the Family have not that care as they ought to have one for anothers wellfare? or because there is not a Broom in it to ridd out the dust? So in this case, the utmost that can be made of it, is, that such a Church is a *defective Church*, a maimed Church (by which it is also corrupt, and may without great care suddenly come to ruine): but that this defect can make it either no *Church*, or a *false Church*, cannot be maintained. In a word then, this know;

That the profession of Christ in the right use of those sacred Ordinances, which the Lord hath ordained and instituted, to be parts of his worship (as Preaching of the word, administration of the Sacraments, and Prayer) is that which doth constitute a true visible Church; and differenceth it from all other societies: It is no *visible Church*, that is without these; and that is a *true visible Church* that hath these. And these I suppose none of you but are convinced in your conscience to be found in this your Mother Church of *England*. These we have, and in having of them, we are the true Church of Christ, having Him for our Head; Ministers and People, for the body of it: and that our standing in this Church is warrantable, safe and good. In the Communion of which Church let us stay our selves, and not hearken to those seducing spirits which would intice you from us. Christ forewarnes of such in these last times, who shall say, *Lo here is Christ, and lo there is Christ*, (for he that tells us of a new Church, may as well tell us of a new Christ): but *believe them not* (saith our Saviour): so I say unto you, give no ear unto these, go not after them; stand fast in that Christian resolution of Christ's Disciples, who, when they were asked, *will you also forsake me*, answered *whither shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life*. You live in a Church, which (through God's

O

mercy)

Math. 24.  
23.

Joh. 6. 68.

mercy) hath a womb to bear you and papps to give you suck; say then *whither shall we go?* Thou, O blessed Mother, hast the words of eternal life! Thou art the *Pillar, and ground of truth*; Oh! make use of this happinesse of being in this Nursery, and of this Society; praying the Lord earnestly to continue his Ordinances amongst us, that for our unfruitfulnesse we may not be deprived of them: for if they be taken from us, *farewell Church, farewell Salvation. The Glory is departed from England.*

If this be God's Nursery, &c. then it may inform us of the sad condition of two sorts of Persons; First of such as are *Aliens and Strangers from the Common-wealth of Israel*, without the Pale, (as all Heathen and Pagans are.) It is a Maxim of the Fathers, *Extra Ecclesiam non est salus*, and *Qui non habet Ecclesiam matrem, non habet Deum patrem*; but this must be understood of the Church Invisible and Catholique, and not of any visible Church: When the visible Church was confined to *Abraham's seed*, we cannot say, No other of the sons of men were saved. What were *Job, Jethro*, and such others? A man may be a true member of the invisible Church, who is not actually (otherwise than in *Vow*) a member of the Church visible. Secondly, of such as have bin members of the Church-visible, yet keep not within the fence. Either *Actively* by a voluntary seperation they excommunicate themselves out of it; The imperwasible Recusant doth so; the negligent Libertine doth so; the forward Phantastick separatist doth so. These are self ex-communicators, and keep themselves out of this Nursery, and fat soyle. The mark that *St. Jude* hath put upon them (before spoken of) wou'd not be forgotten: Sooner shall the Vine of *Sodom*, and the grape of *Gomerrah*, yield a liquor to refresh the heart of God and Man, then such please God by their rash and furious zeal, (these sort of Persons we have met withall before).

Or such as *Passively*, by exclusion or ejection are justly cast out of the Church for their wickednesse and misdemeanors by Excommunication, which is the sorest and severest sentence, that the Church hath: and is not to be insisted *rashly*, but upon serious deliberation: nor by *one alone*, but by the Church; or such as have power by the Church, put into their hand: nor upon *every offender*, but such as are offenders in a high nature: nor upon

1 Sam. 4.  
21.

Use 2.

Ephes. 2.

Potter's  
Charity  
mistaken.  
P. 4. 7.

Jude 19.



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upon such *suddenly*, but after other means have bin used to bring them to repentance, and they continue obstinate: nor *out of by-respects*, but for this end that God may be glorified, the Church edified, and their own souls saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

It is a sentence of the Church. When you are gathered together in the name of Christ, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5. 4. So our Saviour wills, Tell the Church, Mat. 18. 17. that is, those who have the managing of the publique censures of the Church, and not all the Congregation, but such as were to speak to the party, that he might hear; these were a few to whom the Authority was given, as appears *verse 19.* these were to passe sentence as appears St. Paul did, 1 Cor. 5. 3. and the sentence past to be executed in the open Congregation.

Secondly, It is to be inflicted on him that is a member of the Church, that is, on such Persons as professe themselves to be members of the Visible Church, and have given up their names to Christ, and have submitted themselves to the doctrine and discipline of the Church; as for others, hear what the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 5. 11, 12. *What have I to do to judge them that are without.*

Thirdly, It is to be inflicted for some grievous crime. The causes are generally mentioned. Math. 18. 17. Then in special, 2 Thes. 3. 6. 1 Cor. 5. 11. 2 Epist. John 10. It is not to be inflicted for matters trivial, light, and petty but in such cases as more expressly shut out of Heaven mentioned, 1 Cor. 6. 9. But whilst these things are secret, Excommunication hath no place, but they must be publique and manifest, and the Church acquainted with it.

Fourthly, It stretcheth not to all such, but to those that cannot otherwise be brought to repentance. Obstinacy and impenitency, is the cause why the Church is compelled to proceed so severely, with any of her members: The Chirurgion coming to a Patient, and finding swellings and sores in the body, doth not presently proceed to the cutting off an arme, or legg; he useth all other meanes to save that member, (if he can) before he sever it from the body. So must it be in this Case; First, *Admonition*; Secondly, *Suspension*; If that serves not, then *Excommunication* follows. Mat. 18. 16.

1 Cor. 5. 4.  
Math. 18.  
17.

Verse 19.

1 Cor. 5. 3.

1 Cor. 5.  
11, 12.

Math. 18.  
17.  
2 Thes. 3.  
6.

1 Cor. 5.  
11.  
2 Epist.  
John 10.  
1 Cor. 6. 9.

Mat. 18.  
16.

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2 Tim. I.  
20.

Fifthly, it cuts off from the *Communion and fellowship of the faithful*, it drives out of the Church, and so delivers up unto *Sathan*, so much as he Reigneth over those that are without the Church, and there sets up his Throne: yet this must be understood with some Cautions.

Dr Taylor.  
on Tit. c.  
3. Vers. 18.  
p. 709.  
Baldwin  
Caf. Conf.  
p. 1132.

First, This censure intrinseth not the *Bonds of civil right, and society*. An excommunicate Magistrate remaineth a Magistrate still, and must be so acknowledged and obeyed. So *Ambrose* obeyed *Theodosius* whom, and when, himself had excommunicated. This censure onely makes them as no *Christians*, not as no *Magistrates*.

Rom. 12.  
10.

Secondly, It looseth not from the Bands of *common humanity*, but that every thing must be administred unto such a one as is necessary for the preserving of his Life. Rom. 12. 10. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.*

Thirdly, This censure takes not away *natural right*. Such as are of the Family, in consanguinity or affinity, must perform all duties to such a one, which such a Relation hath made his due: the House, Bed, Table, must not be denied to these from whom it was due before this Censure. He that was a Brother before remaineth a Brother, though not a Christian-Brother.

Fourthly, This censure looseth not the Bands of all *spiritual society*, but that, notwithstanding it, we may and must love the excommunicate *in the Lord*; we ought to pray for him, (though not with him) we must admonish and rebuke him still, and upon his Repentance receive him like a Brother as before.

Math. 6.7

But this censure takes a man off, first from all *Communion* with God's people in the *Word, Sacraments, and Prayer*, and renders such a one as a Dog or Swine: for whom these holy things are unmeet, *Math. 6.7.*

Secondly, It taketh a man off from *converse*, so far as necessarily we are not bound unto them. So *John* the Evangelist finding *Cerintus* in the Bath, skipped out of it; and such was the carriage of *Polycarpus* towards *Marcion*, as witnesseth *Irenaeus*.

Sixthly, The scope and end of this censure is, first in regard of



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of the Offender, the salvation of his soul, and recovery of him, and that, 1. by bringing of him to shame, 2<sup>d</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Thes. 3. 14. 2ly. by working sorrow in him for his sin, for the destruction of his flesh, and fleshly corruption which is the ground of true Repentance, 3ly. That his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

1 Cor. 5. 5.  
1 Thel. 3.  
14.

Secondly, In regard of other members of the Church, that they may not be corrupted and infested, 1 Cor. 5. 6. There is great danger in the rest of the Church to retain such wicked members in their society, *Better that one member be cut off, then that the whole body perish.*

1 Cor. 5. 6.  
Bald. Caf.  
Conf. 1134.

Seventhly and lastly, Upon Repentance and manifestation of it, there must be a receiving. The manner how, see 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8.

2 Cor. 2. 6,  
7, 8.

By this you may perceive what a great Maim it is in any Church, where this rod is either not used (as at this day amongst us); or where it is not used aright, (which was a great blemish and scandal to our Church when it was used) being sent out for trivial causes, and compounded-for (before the Congregation was satisfied): the keyes were too oylie, being chiefly used to open a door for Mammon to fill the purse, and to make men stoop before pride and affectation of Dominion; so that it was become a word, *In nomine Domini, incipit omne malum.*

And by this you may perceive how severe a sentence it is, to be justly cast out of the Church; Other sentences reach unto our Bodies, Goods, or Liberties, this to the Soul; by other sentences we are committed to the Jayle, but by this to Sathan; which is worse then to be clapt up in the vilest Dungeon: for although it damne not a man, yet it damms up that man's way by shutting him out of that Church, through which he must go to Heaven; which being so great a danger, let every one take heed of falling into those sins that may draw on him this censure; for however it be lightly and slightly set by, yet that sentence that is justly pronounced on Earth, is ratified and confirmed in Heaven, if Scripture may be believed, *Math. 18, 18, 19, 20.*

Math. 18.  
18, 19, 20.

And so we have done with the Subject considerable in this Proposition: now we come to the Predicate.

He

# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

Text.

*He came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.]*

Two things, we are here to take notice of. First the *Owner's Visitation* of this his Vineyard and Figg-Tree, [*He came.*] Secondly his *Acquisition*; *He sought fruit thereon and found none.* Of the first, his Visitation.

*He came.]*

Psal. 80. 8,  
14.

The Prophet *David* having spoken of Gods *planting his Vine*, Psal. 80. 8. speaks afterwards of God's *visiting his Plant*, verse 14. And indeed the Husbandman or Viner's duty consists principally in these two Particulars; so here we find. After this man spoken of in the Parable, had taken paines in planting this Figg-Tree, he comes and visits it, expecting to find some fruit of his Labours: so Christ came first *Personally* in the dayes of his flesh, when he took Man's nature on him, *John 1. 11. He came unto his own*, albeit *his own received him not*: of that coming speaks the Apostle, *Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8.* And secondly, He came *Ministerially* by his Deputyes and Servants whom he sent unto them; Prophets and wise men, and Scribes, *Math. 23. 24.* (that is, Apostles, Pastors, and Teachers,) so he calleth his Servants by the Customary names of that Country; These he sent, and by them came to gather his Fruit, and Inn his Vintage, as we have it more plainly expressed in another Parable which giveth light to this, *Math. 21. 33.—42.* That you may hence learn for your instruction is;

Joh. 1. 11.

Phil. 2. 6,  
7, 8.

Math. 23.  
24.

Math. 21.  
33.—42.

Dost.

*Visiting follows Planting.*

Act. 15. 36.

Where God hath planted a Church or People, there will he come and visit that Church and People in a peculiar manner. *Visiting* is a coming to see how things are, *Acts 15. 36.* God is sayd to *visit men*, when he comes amongst men to work a redresse of what is amisse; and so in a special manner he visits his Church, when he manifests his care and providence over it, and comes to see the estate of it.

Cant. 6. 1,  
2.

This may be gathered from that answer which the true Church gives to forraign Congregations, who demanded of her, Where her beloved was, that they might seek him with her? *My Beloved is gone down into the Garden. into the Bed of spices to feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies*, that is, amongst the Assemblies of his people, the Garden of his own planting; there



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you shall find him walking, there he is solacing him  
telt with those fruits of righteousness which they bring forth  
unto him, *Cant. 6. 2.* And the Church complaining of Christ's  
absence so long from her, is told by him in the same Chapter  
that he went down *into the Garden of Nuts, to see the fruits of the  
Valley, and to see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranate  
budded*; as if he should say, Thou complainest of my absence O  
my Church! But there is no cause; for I was but walked  
down into my Orchard of Assemblies, to view their forward-  
ness, and take notice of the growth and happy progresse of  
those plants newly 'et, and converted unto me, *verse 11.*

Now God visits his Church two wayes, either by *Benefits*, or  
by *Judgements*; with a *Visitation of mercy*, or with a *Visitation of  
severity*. His visitation of mercy is, when God comes amongst  
men to shew some special mercy, and that either concerning  
*things Temporal*, as, *Gen. 21. 1.* and when he lets his Church  
know that he takes notice of their sorrows, as *Exod. 3. 16.* and  
so sends deliverance; of this is spoken, *Gen. 50. 24.* Or in *spiritual  
things* revealing his everlasting mercy to his Elect: So he visits  
either by Christ, who came not onely to see us, but to save us,  
*Luke 19. 68. Cap. 7. 16.* Or by the Preaching of the Gospel: So  
the time wherein *Jerusalem* heard the Oracles, and saw the Mi-  
racles of our blessed Saviour, is called *the day of her visitation*,  
*Luke 19. 44.*

And he hath a *Visitation of severity* and correction. when he  
punisheth for sin, *Exod. 20. 5.* *Psal. 59. 5.* and cometh with  
unlooked-for calamities: And thus God threatened to visit the  
Offenders of the House of *David*. *I will visit their transgressi-  
on with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes*, *Psal. 89. 33. 11a.*  
*13. 11.* So, *Jer. 5. 29.* *Shall not I visit for these things, saith the  
Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a Nation as this? And  
Hos. 9. 7.* *The dayes of Visitation are come, the dayes of Recem-  
pence are come: Israel shall know it.* This Visitation is not with-  
out all mercy; for when God refuseth to visit, it is the sorest  
visitation of all, *Hos. 4. 14.* Therefore *David* begs in the behalf  
of the Church, *Look down O Lord behold, and visit thy Vine.* And so  
in severity, he visited this Figg-Tree, for not finding what he  
expected, he commanded that it should be cut down, as hereaf-  
ter we shall shew you.

Verf. 11.

Gen. 11. 1.

Exod. 3.

16.

Gen 50.

24.

Luk. 1. 60,

& 7. 19.

Hos. 2. 6.

Luke 19.

44.

Exod. 20.

5.

Psal. 59. 5.

Psal. 89.

33.

11a. 13. 11.

Jer. 5. 29.

Hos. 9. 7.

Hos. 4. 14.

Psal. 80.

14.

Let

Use.

Let it admonish every one of us to expect a *Visitation*, and prepare for it; we think that we have to do no more with *Visitations*, neither *Clergy* nor *Laitie*, all are gone and down, but *Fratres, aliam vobis prouuncio Visitationem*, There is another Visitation, my Brethren, to be thought upon; God himself is a Visitor, and he hath his Articles to be enquired of concerning his Day, his Worship, and his Service on that Day; the Manner of performance thereof, our Life and Conversation, whether it be suitable to our profession. And to these, a Personal answer must be given: It were well if we would put that question to our own souls; *when He comes, what shall I answer him?*

Job 31. 14.

Object.

But it may be long to this Visitation, and so we may do the better.

Resp.

No, He visits us both in *this Life*, and in that *which is to come*. God visits us in this Life three ways; First *Pradicando*, by the Preaching of his word, when God sends his Prophets and Ministers unto us, to declare his will, then he cometh to visit us, Numb. 23. 21. *The Lord his God is with him, the shout of a King is amongst them*, (saith Balaam). So, Math. 18. 20. there God is by his Authority, Power, and Command; and where the King's Proclamation is, there God is *Authoritively* by his Authority; yea, where his word is Preached, there God is *Virtualiter* by virtue and efficacy working with it; instructing the ignorant, comforting the weak, correcting the Stubborne, confirming the Religious: And to this Visitation you are all cited, and must answer to your names? If no lawful impediment be alleadged, it is a contempt and you must answer for it. Every week he keeps a constant visitation amongst us.

Numb. 23.

21.

Math. 18.

20.

Secondly, He visits inwardly, *Inspirando*, by the inspiration of his holy Spirit, putting into our hearts holy thoughts, good desires, and motions. He comes thus to us at one time or other; so he came to visit hard-hearted Pharaoh, Exod. 9. 27. and to Balaam, Numb. 23. 10. and to those Jews, John 6. 34. and so Math. 19. 16. It is a fearful thing to resist these motions, to quench them, and smother them; he stands by us *knocking*, but we will not answer.

Exod. 9.

27.

Numb. 23.

10.

John 6. 34.

Math. 19. 16.

Rev. 3. 20.

Thirdly, He comes a visiting *Corrigendo*, by correcting of us; so all his Chastisements and corrections are Visitations: Thus



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Job calls his Tryals, Job 7. 18. we call the Pettillence God's visitation; and so are other sicknesses lesse mortal (as that which is now upon us): Oh that we would now visit our selves, to should we save God a labour; *If we would judge our selves God would not judge us,* 1 Cor. 11. 31.

Job 7. 18.

1 Cor. 11.  
31.

And yet there is another day of visitation, besides that in this life, which is at the *generall day of judgment*; and those who are not visited here, shall assuredly be visited then; and there will be no plea, no excuse, for absence no appearance by a Proxy: This will be a time of *great calamity and perplexity, counsell will perish from the prudent,* Mich. 7. 3. 4. Jer. 49. 7. 8.

Mich. 7. 3.

4.  
Jer. 49. 7.  
8.

Let us blesse God, that he hath this care over us, *What is man* (saith David) *that thou art so mindfull of him, and the Son of man that thou visitest him,* Psal. 8. 4. David could not but admire God's goodnesse herein; Elizabeth wondered that the Virgin Mary should give her a visit, *Whence cometh this, that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me?* Luke 1. 43. Much more may we admire, that the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, should visit us, and that in his own person, taking our nature on him (as we spake before), doing all things that belonged to a good Visitor; reforming, cleanting, purging, punishing offenders with his own hand, by his own mouth; and comforting, succouring, relieving all such as were weak, sick, and distressed: And, after that in his own person, he had done all this; when he ascended up to the Throne of his Glory (from whence he descended), such was his care, that he left not his Church without Visitors, to oversee it in his absence, till he comes again, who (if faithful) will be careful of doing what was left them in charge. Now, in that he hath this care for us, what shall we do for him? All that he requires of us, and expects from us, is to answer his pains and care in our Creation, Redemption, Sanctification, Preservation; by our fructification: Which is the next poynt we come unto.

Use. 2.  
Psal. 8. 4.

Luk. 1. 43.

[*And he sought fruit thereon and found none.*]

Text

This Husbandman having bestowed paines upon this Figg-tree, in the planting of it, expects a return of fruit; but, contrary to his expectation, he found none at all: fruit he sought, none he found: we begin with the first, The Position is

*Fruit is expected from every Figg-Tree that God hath planted in his Vineyard.*

P

Who

## The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

Who are meant by the Figg Tree, you have before been shewed; and what is to be understood by this Plantation in the Vineyard you have likewise heard: It remains now to give you to understand, what kind of fruit it is that is expected; which being done, we will then come to the Confirmation and Application of the point.

This word *Fruit*, is very fruitful of signification (saith one, and that truly): For it is taken *Properly* or *Improperly*; what Fruits are in the proper and native sense, we all know. That encrease which cometh of the Land, Trees, or Cattel, and other Creatures, is *Fruit Properly*, (but in a general sense) so *Gen. 1. 11, 12. & 4. 3. Psal. 67. 7.* But *more strictly*, it is taken for the last issue of Trees, and so it is opposed to leaves and blossomes: So, *Math. 21. 19.* that Figg-Tree which grew by the way had leaves many, but fruit none, and therefore Christ cursed it.

*Improperly*, the word is used and applied, either to *Persons*, or to *Things*. To *Persons*, so Children are termed the *fruit of the Body* and of the *Womb*, as *Dent. 28. 4. Psal. 127. 3. & 132. 11. Lament. 2. 20. Luke 1. 42. Act. 2. 30.* And that, first, because they are derived from the bodies of their Parents, and proceed from their loins as fruit from a Tree. Secondly, for that they are delightful to the Parent, as the fruit of the Tree is to the Palate.

It is applied unto *Things*; both to *Actions* and *Rewards*. To *Actions* both Good and Bad: *Good Actions* are termed *Fruit*, so *Inward habits of the Spirit* whence good *Actions* do proceed, *Gal. 5. 22.* And of *the Flesh*, whence bad *Actions* issue, *ver. 19. 20.* And *outward works*, issuing from those habits, whether *good* of which we read, *Prov. 12. 14. Rom. 15. 28. Phil. 1. 11. & 4. 17. Colos. 1. 10. Jam. 3. 15.* Or *bad* whereof we read, *Hos. 10. 1. Amos 6. 12. Math. 7. 16. & 12. 33, 34.*

*Rewards* that follow upon our *Actions*, are likewise termed *Fruit*: so the Reward that cometh of *well-doing*, is fruit, *Isa. 3. 10. Prov. 8. 19. & 31. 33.* This Reward is either in *Blessings Temporal*, *Psal. 127. 3. Prov. 12. 14.* Or in *Blessings spiritual*, *Gal. 5. 22. Heb. 12. 10. Jam. 3. 17, 18.* Or *eternal*, *Rom. 6. 22.*

The

Gen. 1. 11,  
12. & 4. 3.  
Psal. 67. 7.  
Mat. 21. 19  
Deut. 28. 4  
Ps. 127. 3.  
& 132. 11.  
Lam. 2. 20.  
Luk. 1. 42.  
Act. 2. 30.  
Mat. 7. 17.  
Gal. 5. 22.  
Ver. 19. 20.  
Pro. 12. 14.  
Rom. 15.  
28.  
Phil. 1. 11.  
& 4. 17.  
Col. 1. 10.  
Jam. 3. 15.  
Hos. 10. 1.  
Amos 6. 12.  
Mat. 7. 16.  
& 12. 33, 34  
Isa. 3. 10.  
Prov. 8. 19.  
& 31. 33.  
Psal. 127.  
13.  
Pro. 12.  
14.  
Gal. 5. 22.  
Heb. 12.  
10.  
Jam. 3. 17,  
18.  
Rom. 6.  
22.



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The Reward of *Evill works* is likewise termed Fruit, *Prov. 1. 31. Jer. 17. 10.* So that which they *suffer in this life* is termed the Fruit of *their thoughts* as *Jer. 6. 19.* and the fruit of *their doings*, *Jer. 21. 14. Mich. 7. 13.* And that which they shall *suffer hereafter* is Fruit too, *Rom. 6. 21.* What fruit had you in those things? *for the end of those things is death.*

The fruit here spoken of, is not to be taken *literally*, but *figuratively*; Nor yet for *Persons*, but *Actions*: Our *good works* are the fruit; and that not in a strict sense, as opposed to thoughts, and words, (as *Jam. 2. 17.*) But in a larger sense, for thoughts, words, and Actions, as *Jer. 17. 10. Revel. 2. 2. & 3. 1.* Again *good works* are ranked into two files; *Offices of Devotion*, as Alms, and such like, which be *Opera Misericordia.* And *Duties of Religion*, as Faith, Repentance, Obedience Prayer &c. these be *Opera justitia.* The former be *manuum Sacrificia*, the latter *cordium Sacrificia*: In the first, the *withered hand* is onely healed; in the latter, the *Dead is raised*; both sorts are expected: *Fruits Inward*, as good thoughts, purposes, desires, &c. and all those good Affections mentioned, *Gal. 5. 22, 23.* And *Fruits Outward*, good words, good works, &c. These are aptly termed *Fruits.*

First, for that they spring from a *Good Root*, the *Righteousnesse of God in us*, *Phil. 1. 11.* that is, such as spring out of the righteousness of God, in us: we must be righteous by the righteousness of God in us, before we can bear any good Fruit having the inherent righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and righteousness inherently wrought in us by the Spirit of God. Righteousnesse is the Tree, and good Works the Fruits of the Tree.

Secondly, for that *they are in the sapp of Faith*, hidden in the heart; which buds, and puts forth, first in blossomes, then in leaves, then in fruit, and so ripens by degrees, as we read *Mark. 4. 28.*

Thirdly, for that *they prove life in the Tree*, as fruit doth; Indeed buds and blossoms are indications of a Tree's growth; but not of a Christian's: There must be more than purposes, and intentions, and outward profession, to prove life in a Christian. Thus having shewed you what that fruit is which God

*Prov. 1. 31*  
*Jer. 17. 10*  
*Jer. 6. 19.*  
*Jer. 21. 14.*  
*Mich. 7. 13.*  
*Rom. 6. 2.*

*Jam. 2. 17.*  
*Jer. 17. 10.*  
*Rev. 2. 2.*  
*& 3. 1.*

*Gal. 5. 22.*

*Phil. 1. 11*

*Mar. 4. 28.*

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expects, we shall now prove it unto you that God doth expect such fruit from every Christian.

Cant. 6.  
11.

*I went down into the Garden of Nuts* (saith Christ) Cant. 6. 11. *to see the fruit of the Vallies, and to see whether the Vines flourished, and the Pomegranates budded.* Had he not expected fruit from those plants of his, he would not have gone down to see the growth, and progress of them: He expected fruit from them, and went down to see if they answered his expectation. So Cant.

Cant. 7.  
12.

7. 12. *Let us get up early to the Vineyards,* (saith the Church to Christ); *let us see if the Vines flourish, and whether the tender Grapes appear, and the Pomegranates put forth:* She calls upon her Beloved to visit with her the Assemblies of her believing Children; that, to their mutual comfort, they might be witnesses and partakers of all the signes and fruits of Grace, which they yielded, and was by them expected should be produced. This is farther set forth by a comparison betwixt Solomon's Vineyard and God's, Cant. 8. 11, 12. *Solomon* expected fruit from his Vineyard that he had planted in *Baal-Hamon*, but by reason that he was not able to dress it, and manure it himself, he was enforced to let it forth unto others, who went away with some part of the encrease for their paines; yet he expected the greatest part of the profit, (as well he might). But I (saith Christ) reserve my Vineyard in my own hands, I dresse it with my own labour; And therefore if thou, O *Solomon*, canst receive from thine so large a Rent, I expect more from my Vineyard, and that the gain and profit thereof should arise wholly & only to my self.

Isa. 5. 4. 7.

For further and clearer proof, read *Isa. 5. 4.* God having bestowed so much paines upon the House of *Israel*, his Vineyard; in planting, fencing, stoning of it, and discharging all the parts of a good Husbandman about it; He tells us what he expected from it, *I looked that it should bring forth Grapes,* (and those good and not wild): He looked to find *Judgment* and *Righteousnesse* exercised therein, ver. 7. Whatever he found, yet this was that which was expected. And the like expectation hath he from his Vineyard now in time of the Gospel; as appears by that Parable propounded by our blessed Saviour; Mat.

Mat. 12. 33

12. 33. &c.

And



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And there is good reason for it, for all Labour is for a Cropp. Who goeth a warfar at any time, at his own charge? *Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof* (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 9. 7.) *He that plants, plants in hope; and he that plowes, plowes in hope,* vers. 10. that is, to be made partaker of his Labours; and shall not God expect some return from us, for all his paines bestowed on us, and taken with us? Surely it is but just and equal that He should taste of the *Labour of his hands*. Here I meet with an Objection which would be removed before I come to apply the Point.

Did not God know before he soughr, that this Figg-Tree was fruitlesse? is any thing concealed from him? doth not he know all men, and needeth not that any should testifie of man, *John 2. 24, 25*? how then can it be said that he expected fruit from it, and that his hope was frustrated?

It cannot be denyed, but that God did foresee it, and knew full well the barrennesse of this Figg-Tree, *Isa. 48. 8. I knew* (saith God) *that thou wouldest grievously transgresse, therefore I have called thee a Transgressor from the Womb*: His expectation cannot be deceived as the hope and expectation of man many times is, or as if there were in God a doubtful hope, of what will follow; but he would give us to understand thereby, how meet it was that this Figg-Tree should have bin fruitful, his *Quarit* as one speaketh is a *Requirite*, He did not seek that which was hid from him, but requireth a debt that was due unto him: Let us make some good Use of this.

If God expects fruit where he hath bestowed paines in planting, then multitudes are deceived in the World, who think to put God off with Leaves or Blossomes, much lesse with wild or blasted fruit.

Some please themselves, (and think to please God too) with their good intentions and purposes; It may be, they bloom very fair, resolve to amend their wicked lives, forsake their Drunkennesse, Swearing, Whoring, and all their vicious courses, but nothing is done, their goodnesse (like *Ephraims*) is but like the *Morning Cloud*, and as the *Morning Dew* that vanisheth away, their purposes are like unto a Ball (blowen out of a Box or Nut-shell) of sope and water, which when it comes to a swelling, puffnesse burts of it self, and vanisheth to nothing.

*Reas.*

Prov. 27.

18.

1 Cor. 9. 7.

Vers. 10.

Psal. 128.

2.

*Object.*

*Resp.*

Isa. 48. 8.

*Use 1.*

Hos. 6. 9.

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Mat. 27. 4.  
Aug. de  
Temp. Ser.  
2 17.  
Prov. 31.  
19.

It is true, good Purposes and Resolutions are to be respected; but if they accompany not good Actions, they are no better then Quaims and Passions which may be in very reprobates (as we find in Balaam, Saul, and Judas himself, who came so far as to say, *I have sinned in betraying Innocent blood.*)

Austin meditating on that which is spoken of the Vertuous Woman, Prov. 31. 19. *She layeth her hands to the Spindle, and her hands take hold on the Distaffe*, wills us to observe that in spinning, there are two Instruments, the *Spindle* in the right hand, and the *Distaffe* in the left: about the Distaffe the Wooll or Flax is folded up, by the Spindle it is drawn out; that which is on the Distaffe is to passe to the Spindle, that which is on the Spindle is already passed: And he applyes these two, to the *Intention* of doing well, and to the *good work done*; Intentions do but fold up the Wooll or Flax upon the Distaffe, it is Doing that draws it out and spins it: *Opus tuum fit in fuso, non in colo* (saith he), Let thy work be done on the Spindle, not on the Distaffe; it is that which must comfort thee; it is that which must do thee good. *Purposes* and *Performances*, are like unto *Jacob* and *Esau*, our Purposes are the first-born, but Performance (with *Jacob*) carries away the Blessing. Your Intentions and Purposes are like sweet buds in the Spring, but that is an uncomfortable Spring that is alls buds and no setting. *Cælum bonis operibus, Gehennam vanis desideriis* (saith one), Hell is full of good Intentions and desires, but Heaven full of good works, (as a holy man that we read of saw in a Vision.)

Other some conceit that if to these buds some green leaves of outward Profession be added, it will yield abundant satisfaction; Talking-Christians they are, but not Walking, nor working Christians; Their leaves make a rustling noise with every blast of wind; Prodigal enough they are in hearing Sermons, and talking in all Company of what they have heard, but that is all: not a berry can be found under any of their leaves, yet they would be accounted for good Christian Professors.

But these should do well to remember what St. James saith, *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God the Father, is this, to visit the Fatherlesse and Widdow in their affliction, and to keep a mans self unspotted from the World*, Jam. 1. 27. though a man say  
ke

Jam. 1. 27.



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III

*he hath Faith and hath not Works can such a Faith save him ? No it cannot, Jam. 2. 14.* It is no signe of a good Tree when all the sap runs into leaves, and spends it self that way ; Nor of a good Christian when all his grace shoots up into words, when his goodness is onely verbal, there is no reality at all ; It is fruit that God expects *fructum laborum*, the fruit of our labours; and he will not be put off with *fructum labiorum*, the fruit of our lips. You hear much, praise the Preacher, talk of the Sermon, repeat largely, sayl not in returning every Quotation in the right Verse and Chaper: *Enfolia, ubi fructus ?* All these are but leaves, where's the fruit ? without which the other in God's account is but a kind of talking Craft or Sophistrie.

Jam. 2. 14.

Believe it Brethren, a *speechlesse life* hath more force in it then a *livelesse speech* : to see one man converted by our Ministry, and bringing forth such fruit as may besseem Repentance and is worthy amendment of life, will edifie a Congregation more then twenty of our Sermons. When *Peter and John* Preached in the Streets, *the People marvelled* with the Text, *Act. 4. 13.* for they had understood that they were unlearned men; but beholding also the man that was healed standing by, *they had nothing to say* (saith the Text,) they were so clearly convinced of a greater power working in them, and by them, as that they had nothing to object against it ; And this is the onely way you have to out-Preach us : And without this, all your Figg-leaves will not hide your shame, nor will they be able, were they as bigg as Targets (as *Pliny* saith the leaves of the *Indian Figg Tree* are,) to bear off that showre of wrath which shall one day fall upon the heads of all barren and fruitles Professors :

Acts 4. 13.

Lastly, Others there are, that bring forth fruit as well as buds and leaves, and yet their fruit shall not be accepted.

First, For that it nor *naturall and kindly* fruit, but degenerate ; In the Creation every seed and plant brought forth fruit *after its kind*, so it is in the Regeneration, good Trees bring forth fruit answerable to the Stock wherein they are engrafted, and the sap they thence receive, and the Profession that they make ; but these men *walk after the lusts of the Gentiles*, and bring forth the *fruits of the flesh*, (such as those mentioned, *Gal. 5. 19.*) no manner of way answering to the seed that hath bin sown in them

Gen. 1. 12.  
Phil. 1. 27;  
& 3. 20.  
Rom. 16.  
2.  
Ephes. 5. 3.  
Gal. 5. 19.

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them by the Ministry of the Word, which they have heard, and the doctrine which they have bin taught,

Secondly, Say it be fruit of a better kind, yet it is *not seasonable* fruit; It may be that they are ten or twenty years in Blooming, so long before they come to any good Resolution, to leave their vicious wayes and courtes; and then they trust to latter springs and shows for the perfecting and ripening of it, and so neglecting the due season of fruit, it happens that, with *Esau*, they find *no place for Repentance, though they seek it carefully with teares.*

Thirdly, Their fruit is *not sound* fruit, but rotten at the coare, (however it be goodly and fair to look upon) like those Apple Trees in *Affyria* (of which *Solinus* writes) the fruit whereof is as yellow as Gold, but being toucht is rotten, or like the *Apples of Sodom*, beautiful to the eye; but being touched they fall to Cinders: zealous they seem outwardly, when they are cold at heart, or else lukewarm: Their aimes and ends in all their devotions is *Self*, like that *Cardinal Wolfey*, who layd a fair Foundation for a good Work, but his *Ego et Rex meus* marr'd all the Structure: he sought to raise his own honour and reputation by the Ruine of his Sovereign's dignity. Such was the fruit the Pharisees of old bare: and such is the fruit of Papists at this day, who seek themselves, in thinking to merit by their good works at the hands of God.

Fourthly, Their fruit is *not fair*, it is shrivelled up, either in some few duties of the first Table, as Hearing, Reading, Praying, &c. but in the duties of the second Table they are very tardy, *Isa. 58. 3, 5, 6.* So the Pharisees made long prayers, and under that pretence *devoured up Widdows houses*, *Math. 23. 14.* and such is the fruit of all Hypocrites. Or else they are observant in the duties of the second Table, with neglect of the first, as, *Math. 23. 23.* and such is the fruit of the Civilian, and moral man.

Fifthly, Their fruit is *not lasting*: it holds good for the Summer season of prosperity, but when the Winter of Adversity and Persecution comes, it fayles, *Luke 8. 13.* And such is the fruit of the Temporary Believer, and Time-serving Christian; his fruit lasts not all the year, not during term of Life, when as a

good

Heb. 12.  
16, 17.

Math. 6.

Isa. 58. 3,  
5, 6.  
Math. 23.  
14.

Math. 23.  
23.

Luke 8. 13.



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good Figg-Tree is never without some Figgs, hanging on the tender boughes, Winter nor Summer: A good Christian like the Palm-Tree spoken of, *Psal. 92. 12.* grows fat and flourishing even in old age.

*Pf. 92. 12.*

Let these and all such other, be advised not to flatter themselves nor suffer themselves by vain pretences to be undone. It is not a fair blossom, a green leaf, nor Fruit of outward Profession, external reformation, common illumination, or any of the like Nature, that will satisfy God's expectation: he looks for fruit, and good fruit too, from every Figg-Tree, and at your hands he will require it.

Wherefore, Be exhorted to be fruitful Christians, that you may answer God's expectation; Let your Fruit be the *fruit of Righteousnesse*, *Phil. 1. 11.* *fruit unto Holinesse*, *Rom. 6. 22.* *fruit unto God*, *Rom. 7. 4.* that is, to the Glory and Praise of God, and such as he will accept of.

*Use 2.*

*Phil. 1. 11.*  
*Rom. 6. 22*  
*Rom. 7. 4.*

Now that this Use may be the more profitable, I shall acquaint you with three particulars; First with the *Properties* or *Qualifications* of that fruit that shall find acceptance. Secondly, with the *means* that must be used for the producing of fruit so qualified. Thirdly, with the *motives* that may stir us up to the bringing forth of such fruit: Of each of these briefly, and in order.

That our Fruit may be rightly qualified, and so accepted, care must be had of the *Quality* and *Quantity* of them.

For the *Quality*, they must be Good, both in respect of *Substance* and *Circumstance*.

For *Substance* they must be good *quoad fontem* and *quoad finem*. They must proceed from a good Fountain, the Spirit of God; and aime at a right end, the Glory of God.

The *Fountain must be good*; They must be the fruits of the Spirit, and proceed from the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 22.* To bring forth good fruits, more than Nature is required. Natural abilities, be they never so excellent, no, nor moral principles, be they never so eminent, are sufficient hereunto. A Tree must live before it bear fruit, and it is the Spirit that quickneth, and to prevent deceit herein, (for many pretend the Spirit who have it not) care must be had that what we do be warranted by the Word,

*Gal. 5. 22.*  
*Semen natura non*  
*consergit*  
*in fructum*  
*Gratia.*  
*Joh. 6. 3.*

Q

John

Joh. 3. 21.  
Rom. 14.  
23.

*Joh. 3. 21.* if it answers not the Rule, it proceeds not from the Spirit of God but from a deluding Spirit and cannot be good.

Eph. 1. 12.  
Hos. 10. 1.

As the Fountain must be good, so must the *End* be that we aime at. It is not colour, nor juice, that distinguisheth a Crab from an Apple; but the relish: The End of an Action, is that which giveth relish unto an action: The *Ultimate End* is the Glory of God, *Ephes. 1. 12.* *Israel* was counted an *empty Vine* for that it brought forth fruit unto it self, *Hos. 10. 1.* albeit Secondly, both our Own and our Neighbour's good is to be respected. By our fruitfulness our Neighbour must be edified; our own faith and thankfulness testified; our high Calling in Christ answered; Sin and Judgment diverted; Heaven and Happiness in the end obtained.

As *Substance*, so *Circumstance* must be respected in the fruit we bear: and that, 1. Of Person, or Calling. 2. Of Time. 3. Of Place.

Psal. 1. 3.

Judg. 9. 10.

It must be *Our own Fruit*, *Psal. 1. 3.* Besides the fruit which is of a *General kind*, and grows upon every Tree of God's planting, and upon every Branch that is grafted in the true Vine (as Love, Joy, Peace, and the rest, mentioned *Gal. 5. 22.*) there is a more *speciall* and *particular Fruit*, which every Tree must bring forth according to its kind. As the Olive-Tree hath its fatness; the Figg-Tree, his sweetness; The Vine, his Wine, that cheareth God and man: So every Christian hath his proper fruit, whereby he must be known in that Calling, wherein God hath set him. A King (saith *Austin*) serveth God after one sort as he is a man, after another sort as he is a King: As he is a Man, he serveth him by living faithfully; as he is a King, by making Lawes for the keeping of his Subjects in peace and tranquillity. And so it may be said of God's whole Household, and Family; each one oweth a service to God, after one sort, in the generall fruit of holynesse; and after another in the proper fruits of our particular Callings and Stations: Whence it is, that that may be good in one, that is not in another; as appears by two remarkable Instances. The one of *Huzzah*, who (it is likely) out of good intent put his hand to the Ark, to stay it, when it tottered, and was like to fall: This was not his Fruit, none might touch

2 Sam. 6. 6.  
Num. 18. 3.  
1 Chro. 13.  
10.



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touch the Ark but the Levites onely; therefore God was displeased with it, and smote him for it, so that he dyed presently before the Lord, *1 Chron. 13. 10.*

The other Instance is in King *Uzziah* who went into the Temple to burn Incense upon the Altar of Incense; This was not his Fruit, it appertained not to him to do it, but to the Priests, the Sons of *Aaron*, (as *Azariah* told him, *2 Chron. 26. 18.*) and therefore it made not for his honour, for he was immediately struck with Leprosy, which appeared in his forehead to his shame, insomuch that he was thereupon thrust out of the Temple for a Leper. It is not enough (then) that our works are such as beseeem Repentance in the general; but they must be such as have a due respect unto the performance of those things which we are called unto in our Repentance, *Isa. 1. 16, 17. Luk. 4. 12, 13, 14.*

As it must be proper fruit, so it must be *seasonable*. It is said of the godly man, that *he bringeth forth his fruit in his season*, *Psal. 1. 3.* Every thing is *beautiful in its season*: A word spoke (much more a deed done) in due season, *is like Apples of Gold with pictures of Silver*, *Prov. 25. 11.* Then is our Fruit ripe, pleasant, profitable, and acceptable, when it is well timed; for want of this it rots and putrifies, as doth the untimely fruit of all Hypocrites.

Nor may the *Place* be altogether neglected; For (as King *Theodorick* speaketh in *Cassiodore*), every good thing is proper in its place, and all things praise-worthy lose their commendation, unlesse they do enjoy their proper seat. Buying and selling is good, but not in the *Temple*, as appeares *Joh. 2. 14. 15.* Those Buyers and Sellers of Sheep and Oxen, and Money changers, did no other then what might lawfully be done, in providing Sacrifices ready for those who came from farr, and in exchanging Gold for Silver; great pieces for smaller; strange coyne for money current in that place: Their fault was, that they did all this in the *Temple*, and encroached upon a place consecrated to God, which they prophaned with their merchandise, in which regard Christ whipt them out like Dogges; and that upon this ground, *my House shall be called a House of Prayer*. And thus you see of what Quality our Fruit must be that it may be accepted.

*2 Chron. 26. 16.*

*Vcr. 18.*

*Vcr. 19. 20.*

*Isa. 1. 16, 17.*

*Luk. 4. 12, 13, 14.*

*Psal. 1. 3.*

*Eccl. 3. 11.*

*Pro. 25. 11.*

*Aptum est omne bonū locis suis, et laudabilia quæq; descendunt, nisi congruā sede potentiuntur. Cassio. lib. 5. Var. 22.*

*Joh. 2. 14, 15.*

*Isa. 56. 7.*

*Mat. 21.*

*13.*

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Revel. 3. 2.

Phil. 1. 11.

Rev. 22. 2.

Cant. 7. 13

Jam. 3. 17.

Heb. 5. 12.

Acts 9. 36.

Rom. 7. 4.

Colos. 2. 7.

Joh. 15. 4.

Numb. 17.

8.

Luke 23.

39,—43.

Rom. 8. 9.

Eph. 2. 22.

Rom. 8.

11.

Eph. 3. 16.

1 Thef. 5.

23.

Now for the *Quantity* of it, our Fruit must be full; the want of this was objected to the Church of *Sardis*, *Rev. 3. 2.* And *St. Paul's* prayer on the *Philippians* behalf was, that they might be filled with the fruits of *Righteousnesse*, *Phil. 1. 11.* Now our fruits may be said to be full, when (like that Tree of Life mentioned, *Revel. 22. 2.*) we bear *twelve manner of Fruits*, and (as we read in *Cant. 7. 13.*) *all kind of sweet Fruits, old and new*: when we manifest in our lives every grace of the Spirit, as well as any, and make conscience of every Christian duty, as well as of any; when every member of the Body, power and faculty of the soul, is laden with Fruit, no branch empty, *Jam. 3. 17.*

Secondly, When our Fruits are *answerable to the means*, and cost bestowed on us. The want of this was blamed in the *Hebrews*, *Cap. 5. 12.* Of which more hereafter.

Thirdly, When our works are *finished* then they are full, *Act. 9. 36.* Till then they are not ripe, nor have they attained to perfect fulnesse.

And thus much of the first Particular I propounded. Now to the second; the *Meanes* that must be used, that the Fruit we bear may be thus *Qualified*: and so;

First, *Get to be engrafted into a lively stock*, that is, into Christ; He is the Noble Stock into which all the Plants of Paradise must be set and engrafted, *Rom. 7. 4. Colos. 2. 7. without him we can do nothing*, *John 15. 4.* but being once set in Him, were we as dry as *Aarons* withered Rod, we shall presently be changed into a flourishing and fruitful Tree, as was the Thief converted on the Crosse. *Luke 23. 39,—43.* Who no sooner took hold on Christ, but presently became another man; manifesting the fruits of his engrafting, in believing, confessing, giving testimony of Christ's Innocency, reproving his fellow Offender for his Blasphemy; He is his own accuser, and humbly desireth to be remembered in mercy.

Secondly, *Ea- nestly beg the spirit of God* whereby the sap may be conveyed from the Root, into every branch; without it, we can have no communion with Christ. *Rom. 8. 9. Ephes. 2. 22.* by it we shall be quickered, *Rom. 8. 11.* and strengthened to every good work and action, *Ephes. 3. 16.* Sanctified throughout, in body, in soul, and in spirit, *1 Thef. 5. 23.* If the Clouds



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be full, they will pour forth Rain upon the Earth, (saith Solomon, Eccles. 11. 3.): So if a man be thus enriched with the spirit of grace, he cannot but be fruitful. For as Christ and his Spirit are not sundred; so cannot the Spirit be sundred from the fruits of the Spirit, which are those mentioned, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long suffering, &c.* Now by fervent and faithful prayer unto God the Spirit may be obtained, *Luke 11. 13.* being accompanied with careful and conscionable hearing of the word, *Acts 10. 44.*

Eccles. 11.  
3.

Gal. 5. 22.  
23.

Luke 11.  
13.  
Acts. 10. 44.

Thirdly, Look that there be *store of suckers and feeders* about the Root, these are they (you know) that by spreading themselves this way and that way, gather strength and nourishment to the Tree, and every branch thereof, whereby it becomes fruitful: Holy affections, Love, Joys, desire, Fear, Grief, &c. These are the feeders of the Soul, and should draw nourishment unto it from every one of Gods Ordinances, from the Word Read or Preached, Sacraments administred, and from all Providential Administrations whether of Mercy or Judgment. *David* was abundant this way, as appears in the whole Book of the Psalms, especially in *Psal. 119.* where we may find in every verse almost he catcheth hold on Mercies, Judgments, Promises, Threatnings; as the Ivey catcheth hold with its claw on every twigg, to climb up to its stature.

Psal. 119.

Fourthly, *Preserve the Bark*, let not that be peeled off from the Tree; It is threatned as a sore Judgment against *Israel* that the Figg Tree should be barked with the teeth of noysome Creatures, that God would send into their Land to punish them, insomuch that the boughes thereof should be left white; *Joel 1. 7.* To be left white without bark, was an indication of a speedy withering. That bough that lies open without bark (saith *Gregory* on that place) looks white, but perisheth. Thy conscience is like the Bark of the Figg Tree; presumptuous sins are like those Creatures, that peel off the bark, beware of them; for by them, the conscience is wasted and consumed as iron is by rust: We sin too much through ignorance and infirmity, but when we sin wilfully and presumptuously against knowledge, and the light of conscience, our boughes will soon wax white; How frequent is it to see men that lose a good conscience, with  
it

Joel 1. 7.

1 Tim. 1.  
19.

Tit. 1. 15.

Psal. 19. 13.

Acts 23. 1.

Act. 24. 16.

2 Cor. 1.  
12.

Heb. 13. 8.

Prov. 21. 8.

Phil. 1. 10.

it to lose their gifts, 1 Tim. 1. 19. If the Ship of conscience wrack, the Merchandise of Faith will soon suffer wrack: Our outward actions, (as well as affections) may have a colour of good (as white is of Innocency); but our bark being pilled, it is no good whitenesse, but an indication of a perishing condition; without a good conscience all our actions, yea our best performances are so far from goodnesse and acceptance, that they are abominable and distasteful unto God: our Affections and outward Actions may have a colour of good, but all is defiled before God. Tit. 1. 15. the conscience being defiled, it defiles all it meddles with; Hence David prayed to earnestly to be kept from this barking of his boughes by any such sins, Psal. 19. 13. The like care had Paul, Acts 23. 1. That for the time past, and for the time present, and future, he did exercise himself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards Men, Acts 24. 16. And in so doing we shall grow in the fruit of Righteousnesse, and have cause to rejoyce in our fruitfulness, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Conscience is our Paradise, there our Trees will thrive, we shall live honestly, Heb. 13. 8. Work Righteousnesse, Prov. 21. 8. and walk without giving offence, Phil. 1. 10.

Hos. 14. 3.

Jam. 1. 21.

Mat. 13. 4.

Heb. 12.  
11.

Fifthly, Be frequent and abundant in the exercises of mortification; Bare the Tree about the Root, cast away all loose earth; withdraw thy soul from all worldly staves and comforts: when the world hath left us naked, and destitute of her vain succours, we shall then take faster hold on Christ our Saviour, in whom the Fatherlesse find mercy; lopp off all superfluous twigs, and excremental branches which steal away the nourishment that should maintain the Tree, Jam. 1. 21. get a humble and a tender heart, the hard and stony heart suffers not the seed to take Root, Math. 13. 4. For this end, make good use of all Crosses and Afflictions, let them cause thee to acknowledge thy sins, and break thy heart in the sight of God; beseech him that thou being exercised under them maist at length bring forth the quiet fruit of Righteousnesse, Heb. 12. 11. Weed often, and do it on thy knees (as weeders do); this is the way to be fruitful.

Sixthly and Lastly, To all this, the Influence of Heaven must be added, else no Fruit can be expected (as before hath been shewed)



shewed) *The Heavens must hear the Earth*, *Hos. 2. 21.* The beames of the Sun of Righteousnesse shining in his Church, must warm and cherish us, *Mal. 4. 2.* The former and latter raine must moysten us, *Joel 2. 23.* The winds of Gods spirit must blow on us, to quicken us, *Cant. 4. 14.* This is the way to have fattenesse drop down upon us, *Psal. 65. 10.* As for those who de ight to live in the shade, and shelter their souls from the influence of Heaven, that withdraw their hearts from the directions and comforts of an effectual and painful Ministry, let not such ever look to become fruitful: And so much of the second Particular that I propounded to you; Now to the third and last, which is the *Motives* to stir us up to the using of these meanes, that we may bring forth fruit so qualified as hath bin declared; and they are many.

Some respect God, some his Gospel, some Man, others the Creature.

In regard of God, we ought to be fruitful. First, for that he hath deserved it. Secondly, he seeks for it. Thirdly, and when he finds it, he counts himself honoured and glorified by it.

First, He hath deserved Fruit from us, in that he hath *bought us* at a dear rate *from our vain conversation*, to serve Him all our dayes in Holinesse and Righteousnesse, He hath chosen us to be a *Peculiar People unto himself*, *zealous of good works*, and made choyce of us before others, that we should be Fruitful, and that our Fruit should *abide and abound*. He hath made us his own workmanship, by the effectual calling of grace, and *created us to good works, to walk in them*. He hath planted us, he'ged us about, manured us, watered us with the sweet dews of his Word and Gospel from Heaven; trimmed us with his pruning hook of Judgments and Corrections: And *what could he do more for us that he hath not done?* And what can he expect lesse from us, towards all his paines and travails with us then Fruit? *He that sows, sows in hope* (saith the Apostle). God hath set in hope, planted in hope, watered in hope, of some answerable return, and shall it be denyed? or canst thou imagine that God hath took all this paines with thee, and bestowed all this cost upon thee, that thou shouldst bear green boughes, or gay blot

*Hos. 2. 21.*

*Mal. 4. 2.*

*Joel 2. 23.*

*Cant. 4. 16.*

*Psal. 65. 10*

*1 Pet. 1. 18.*

*Luke 1. 75.*

*Tir. 2. 14.*

*Joh. 15. 16*

*Eph. 2. 10.*

*Isa. 5.*

*1 Cor. 9. 7.*

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somes onely? Indeed leaves come of the seed, and chaff from the kernel: but doth any man plant for leaves, and sow for chaff? you know it is fruit that they look for: Had it not bin for that, thou hadst bin no Tree; Fruit was that, for which thou wert set, and hast been thus long preserved. As God (then) hath had his time of planting, so in equity and justice let him have his Vintage, and now at length eat of the labours of his hand.

Secondly, *He hath sought it of us*, as our Text speaks. The Prophet *Nahum* tell us, that the first ripe Figgs if they be shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater, Nah. 3. 12. Such ripe Figgs we ought to be. The very signification of Gods will, should be motive strong enough to perswade obedience, albeit no other reason nor inducement appears: we should offer and present our selves and fruits to him, and not put him to the trouble to seek for his own; but when he doth come and seek to us for it (which he need not do) it is not safe for us to disappoint him.

Now seeking implies divers things; First, an earnest desire to find the thing sought for, as, *Luke 15. 4. Math. 13. 45*: Such an earnest desire hath God to find Fruit on us, whom he hath planted in his Church, as appears by those patherical speeches which he useth, *Deut. 5. 29, & 32. 29. Psal. 81. 13. Hos. 6. 4.* And in this Chapter, *Luke 13. 34, & 19. 41, 42*. By all which, and many such like, it appears that He doth seek seriously, and fervently for fruit, and is much grieved when he is deceived in his expectation.

Secondly, Seeking imports diligence and frequency: It is no rare but a continued A&t. So *Cant. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. Luk. 15. 8. 2 Tim. 1. 17*. Thus God comes and seeks for fruit, not once, nor twice, and then gives over, but he comes often; *How often would I have gathered thee* (saith Christ), *Math. 23. 37*. not once, but often, and that by the external ministry of the Prophets, sent before him, *ver. 34. 35*. and often in his own person, (as on the next verse we shall hear more fully). And how often hath he come seeking fruit from us, by the ministry of his Servants since his departing from us, whom he hath sent unto us to receive your Fruits, and gather up his Rent, *Cant. 8. 11. Math. 21. 34*. One day in seaven we come constantly unto you, (besides other times, as we have occasion); and are still put off;

we

Pf. 128. 2.

Nah. 3. 12.

1 Thes. 4. 3.

Psal. 4. 5.

Rom. 12. 1.

Luk. 15. 4.

Mat. 13. 45

Deut. 5.

20, & 32,

29.

Psal. 81.

13.

Hos. 6. 4.

Luk. 13.

34, & 19,

41, 42.

Cant. 3.

1. — 5.

Luk. 15. 8.

2 Tim. 1.

17.

Mat. 23.

37.

Ver. 34.

35.

Cant. 8.

11.

Mat. 21.

34.



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we spread out our hands *all the day long*, but not one penny that we can take; no fruit of Faith, Repentance, new Obedience, that appears in your lives, after all our labours: so that we are enforced to complain to God of your barrenness, and he compelled to take distress, sometimes on your Bodies; sometimes on your Goods; sometimes on your friends and children; which yet he is willing graciously to restore, upon promise of better payment: In short, no way of finding, but that God hath used in seeking Fruit, hoping to find it at last; and doth it not concern us then to be fruitful;

Isa. 65. 2.

1 Cor. II.  
30.

Thirdly, Seeking implies *mildness and gentleness*: She that lost her goat swept her house gently, *Luk. 15. 8.* she laid not about with her broom, nor raised too much dust, that was not the way to find it: God comes to us in a mild way, not wounding, and killing, but as he came to *Adam Gen. 3. 8.* so he comes to us in the cool of the day, he did not run upon him as greedy of revenge, but walked, as loath to punish; Nor was it in the heat of the day, when the Sun was at his full height, but in the cool of the Evening, that he came, to take an account from him, for eating of the forbidden Fruit: And so, with a soft and slow pace, in the cool of the day, in much Love and gentleness, he comes to require the commanded (and deserved) fruit from us. God doth beseech you by us his unworthy Ministers, *2 Cor. 5. 20.* And I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and the Fruit that God thus graciously seeks for, *Rom. 12. 1.*

Luk. 15. 8.

Gen. 3. 8.

2 Cor. 5.  
20.

Rom. 12. 1.

Joh. 15. 8.

2 Thes. I.  
12.

Thirdly, We should bring forth fruit, for that God holds himself glorified by it: Herein is my Father glorified (saith Christ) that you bear much fruit, *John 15. 8.* St. Paul prayed earnestly and incessantly, for the *Thessalonians*, that they might be enabled to walk worthy of that calling whereunto they were called and that they might fulfil all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of Faith in them with Power: And the ground and reason of that his prayer was, that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them, *2 Thes. I. 12.* Fruitfulness in the former graces was the means of bringing glory unto Christ, and the main scope of a Christian is to glorify his name; Nor can we

Math. 5.  
16.

look to be glorified in him, but in and through our own glorifying of him; No better way to do this than by our fruitfulness, *Math. 5. 16.* our *Fruittifying* and God's *Glorifying* are joyned together. You know we blame the *Root* of an unfruitful Tree, or fault the *Husbandman*, but in case of fruitfulness we commend both; so is it in this case. Let this prevail with us to bear fruit to God: It is a high honour that God doth put upon us, to esteem himself honoured by any of us; he needs not our furtherance therein, yet he esteems himself to be honoured by our fruits. We pray with our tongue, *Hallowed be thy name*; let us endeavour it in our lives by bringing forth such fruit as may make to his praise. And thus of the motives which respect God.

Tit. 2. 11,  
12.

Colos. 1. 6.

Jam. 3. 17.

Act. 13. 48.

2 Thes. 3.

1.

Rom. 2. 24

Eph. 36.

20,

Gen. 35.

30.

Secondly, We ought to have a special regard to the credit of the Gospel, which is the Doctrine of Gods grace, and teacheth men to be fruitful, in denying all ungodly lusts, and in living soberly righteously and godly in this evil World, *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* yea such is the power and efficacy of it, as that it bringeth forth fruit, in all that embrace it, and entertain the truth of it in love, *Colos. 1. 6.* It is a wisdom full of good fruits, *Jam. 3. 17.* which fruits when we shew forth, then we glorify it, *Acts 13. 48.* *2 Thes. 3. 1.* but on the other side if we be barren and fruitlesse, who do profess it, or any way vitious; the Gospel is dishonoured and blasphemed by us, *Rom. 2. 24.* See! say some prophane ones of the World, (when they hear of any thing amisse in a Professor) these are your Gospellers your Bible-bearers; here is the fruit of running after Sermons, &c. and so, as *Jacob* said of his son's cruelty towards the *Sichemites*, we may say of these, they make the Gospel to stink in the Nostrils of the Inhabitants of the Land: their vitious life is like a loathsome fly in that precious box of Oynment. Thus *Dioclesian* (as *Ensebius* reports) seeing and observing the loose carriage of some professed Christians, was induced to think that Religion was no other then a wretched device of wicked men.

Rom. 10.  
15.

Great care therefore ought we to take that the Gospel be not scandalized by our unfruitfulness; As the feet of those are beautiful that bring unto us the glad tidings of Salvation; so should the hands of those be beautiful that receive the same, that the



the Gospel be not ashamed of us. Live as it prescribes, and as you profess; let *your conversation* be such as becomes it, *Phil. 1. 27.* Remember God could not endure to have such holy things profaned under the Law, as were but Types of the Gospel, (as the Vestments and Utensils of the Temple): And can we think that he is lesse jealous of the Gospel it self, that it be not discredited, and dishonoured by us? This seriously considered, cannot but be a quickening motive to fruitfulness.

In regard of man there are other considerable motives why we should be fruitful; *The lips of the Righteous* (saith *Solomon*) feed many, *Prov. 10. 21.* If the fruit that growes upon that one bough be so richly laden, and that many a soul is comforted by the fruit of the Lipps of a good and godly Christian, How many, think you, are fed and refreshed with the fruit that growes upon the other branches of the Tree? How many are comforted with the fruit of their eyes? ears? hands? *Job 29. 11, — 17.* Of every fruitful Christian we may say, as is said of the Vine, *Isa. 65. 8. Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.*

More Particularly, by our Fruit we feed both others, and our selves; in both respects we should be stirred up to fruitfulness.

Others are much refreshed and comforted therewith, nothing doth more refresh the bowels of God's Ministers, (the Dressers of his Vines and Figg-Trees) then to see the branches loaden with the Fruit of Faith, Love, Obedience, &c. In which regard the Apostle praiseth God for the *Thessalonians*, *1 Thes. 1. 2, 10.* and counted them his Joy, Glory, and Crown of rejoycing, *1 Thes. 2. 19, 20.* And thus much *St. Paul* intimates to *Philemon*, *Brother let me have joy of thee in the Lord*; (or, let me enjoy this Fruit from thee in the Lord) *Refresh my bowels in the Lord*, *Phil. 2. 20.* that is, If thou wilt grant what I desire in the Lord of thee, in so doing thou shalt refresh and revive my bowels within me. The work of the Minister is full of labour and toyl in Digging, Dressing, Dunging of the Trees planted in God's Orchard, (as hereafter with Gods good leave shall be shewed) but nothing doth more revive them after all their wearisome labour, than their Peoples fruitfulness.

*Phil. 1. 27.*

*Prov. 10. 21.*

*Job. 29. 11, — 17.*

*Isa. 65. 8.*

*1 Thes. 1. 2, — 10.*

*Phil. 2. 20.*

Luke 22.  
32.

Math. 6.

16.

Act. 11. 28,  
& 15, 3.

1 Pet. 2. 12,  
& 1 Pet.  
3. 1.

1 Pet. 2. 15,  
& 3, 16.

Text. ad  
Scap. Hist.  
Wald. Lib.  
2. Cap. 5.

And as Ministers, so private persons, are much revived and refreshed by our Fruits: Our Saviour's command to *Peter* was, that he should *strengthen the Brethren*, Luke 22. 32. Those who are already converted (if weak) are hereby confirmed, and further strengthened; or (if strong) further provoked, to go on in a Christian course, and their hearts gladdened; they are made to laugh (with *Abraham*) to behold the Fruit of the Gospel in our conversations, *Math. 5. 16. Acts 11. 8, & 15. 3.*

Those who are not converted; (if they belong to God's Election) are hereby prepared to Conversion, and wonn (even without the word) to a liking of the word and profession thereof, which they see to be so Holy, Charitable, and Fruitful, 1 Pet. 2. 12, &c. 1 Pet. 3. 1. So *Justin Martyr* seeing the Patience and Constancy of the Martyrs in those times, fell in love with Religion, and became himself a Martyr: And we read of one *Cecilia* a Virgin, who by her constancy and exhortations before, and at her Martyrdom, converted four hundred: *Latimer* blessed God, that ever he knew *Bilney*. *Exempla trahunt mores*, Exemplary good works are, as an Admant very attractive; An excellent Oratory, ha h a fruitful conversation to winn others.

As for those who are not Elect, and belong not to God; yet by a godly and fruitful Conversation, their mouths will be stoppt, muzzled, or button'd up, 1 Pet. 2. 15. they cannot bark, (as they gladly would) against the truth & the professors of it. *Chrysostom* calls good works *unanswerable Syllogisms*, invincible demonstrations, to confute Pagans. Thus did the Primitive Christians confute their Adversaries, (as *Tertullian* shewes) and *Lewis* the 12 King of France, hearing much evil of the *Waldenses* in his Realm, sent certain to enquire into the businesse, and hearing what they related of them, that they found them not guilty of any such crime as was reported, but that they religiously observed the Sabbath day, baptized their Children after the order of the Primitive Church; taught them the Articles of the Christian faith, and the Commandements of God. The King said (and bound it with an Oath) that they were better men, then either himself, or any of his Subjects. A fruitful life will thrattle envy, and stop the mouth of malice. And thus in regard of others, our care should be to become fruitful.

Lastly,



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Lastly, *In regard of our selves*, and our own good, we should be fruitful: For first, hereby we shall *make our Calling and Election sure*, *1 Thes. 5. 4, 5. 2 Pet. 1. 10.* and have a comfortable Testimony that we are indeed Christ's Disciples, *Joh. 15. 8. & 13. 35. 1 Joh. 3. 7.*

Secondly, *We* shall so far get into God's favour, as that we shall speed in all our suits; nothing shall be denyed us that we ask, if it may make for God's glory and our good, *Joh. 15. 7. 16. Mat. 15. 28.*

Thirdly, God will have a special care of us. The *Israelites* in their conquests were forbidden to lift up an *Axe* against any Tree that bare fruit, *Dent. 20. 19, 20.* God will provide for all fruitful Christians, in publique calamities, *Ezek. 9. 4.*

Fourthly, No Law shall be against such, *Gal. 5. 23, 23.* Those who bring forth the fruits of the flesh, have *no Gospel for them*; those who bring forth the fruits of the spirit, have *no Law against them*; they have indeed a Law to direct them, but none to compel them, nor condemn them, *Rom. 8. 1.*

Fifthly, *It shall be unto us according to our fruit*, *Jer. 17. 10.* We read that *Zerxes* adorned the Plane-Tree, and hung it with many rich and pretious jewels, because he delighted in the shade thereof; much more will God adorn fruitful Trees, for that he delights in the fruit thereof. In this life he will reward with glory and honour; A fruitful Christian carries a Heaven in his heart, Joy and Comfort, *Cant. 7. 17.* a happy and blessed communion there is betwixt Christ and him; and hereafter there is a Blessing abides him for ever, *Heb. 7. 8.* And thus you have heard what reason we have to be fruitful, both in respect of others, and of our selves as well as others.

Lastly, If we cast our eyes upon the whole Creation, and every creature therein that God hath made, we may be stirred up and provoked to fruitfulness. The Heaven, the Earth, the Sea, and all the ein, are fruitful in their kind; and shall man be barren and fruitless, for whom all these are fruitful? Doth not the Sun come forth as a Bride groom out of his Chamber daily, rejoicing as a Gyant to run his course, to enlighten the earth with his beams, and nourish and cherish all things with the heat thereof? The Moon, and the Stars, quicken this lower World

by

*1 Thes. 5. 45. 2 Pet. 1. 10. Joh. 15. 8. & 13. 25. 1 Joh. 3. 7.*

*Joh. 15. 7. 16. Mat. 15. 28.*

*Deut. 20. 19, 20. Ezek. 9. 3. Gal. 5. 23, 23.*

*Rom. 8. 1. Jer. 17. 10.*

*Cant. 7. 17.*

*Heb. 7. 8.*

*Psal. 19.*

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by their operative Influence; The big-bellied Clouds, which fly up and down on the wings of the wind, deliver their moist burthens on the earth, and showre down their seasonable dewes, to cool and moisten it, that it may bear fruit: Doth not the Earth make a thankful return, and yield her fatness and riches to innumerable creatures that live on it, and depend upon her as their common Mother for maintenance? and what creature is there that lives on it, but yields some fruit? Beasts, Trees, Plants, all bring forth after their kind for the good of man, that man may bring forth fruit to God, for whose Glory he was created.

Let these considerations prevail with us, that we may in some sort answer the Lord's expectations from us; he looks for fruit, let him find it in us: Oh that it could be said of us, as it was of the Land of Canaan, Deut. 8. 7; 8, 9. *It is a good Land a land of Brooks of Water, of Fountains that spring out of the Valleys and Hills: A Land of Wheat and Barley and Vines and Figg-Trees and Pomegranates; A Land of Oyl Olive, and Hony; A Land whose stones are Iron, and out of whose Hills thou mayst dig Brasse.* We have Springs of means to inform our minds, and Brooks of knowledge, to direct our course; Our good works should stand like those fields of *Wheat and Barley; Vines, Figg-Trees, and Pomegranates*, let be our fruitful Meditations; Oyl and Hony, the Grace of our lips: our Understanding full of good things, our whole life Wells and Vineyards to comfort both our selves and others: our very rocks should be Iron, and our hills yield brasse, our most barren works should be profitable to others, our very Falls others warnings to prevent high-mindednesse: And so,

We may gather much comfort from our fruitfulness, which sweetly seals up our Calling to glory, and virtue, as the budding and bringing forth of ripe *Almonds* did *Aaron's* Calling to the Priest-hood; It may assure us, that we are regenerated, set into Christ, quickned by his Spirit, and that we live in him, out of whom we could not be fruitful in good works. Good Fruit is an undeniable Argument of a good Tree, for that a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good fruit (as our Saviour tells us).

I know the most fruitful Christian comes far short of that fruitfulness that should be in him; and his defectiveness in holy

Deut. 8. 7,  
8, 9.

Use 3.

Mat. 7. 18.



holy duties ( both to God and man ) may sometimes cause him to question his estate , but that should not too much deject the spirits of any of us ; for the fruit of the Spirit , like the fruits of the Earth, ripens by degrees, and much of it is nipped in the bud and blossome, and comes to nothing ; but a little fruit, if it be of the right kind , proves that Tree to be good , and the promise is, that if there be any fruit at all , God will *purge that branch*, and help it against corruption, so that it *shall bring forth more fruit*, *Joh. 15. 1. 2.* But when there is no good Fruit to be found under our leaves , that is a miserable sterility indeed ; And yet such was the sterility of the Figg-Tree mentioned in my Text.

*He came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.]*

[And found none.]

Shews of fruit it made, but brought forth nothing less. It was like the deceitful ground , that mocked the Husbandman : Had there been here a Figg , and there a Figg , like the shaking of an Olive Tree , two or three in the top of the uppermost boughes, or outward branches, the Husbandman had not been altogether deceived in his expectation, ( albeit that had not answered his cost and pains bestowed on it ) but there was *none*, no not one Figg that could be found growing upon it. Thus you see.

*Where God hath well deserved , there many times he is ill requited.*

The *Gentiles* who lived without the Pale of the Church are charged with this sin of Ingratitude , *Rom. 1. 21.* God had bountifully declared himself unto them , even by the light of Nature , and the Book of the Creatures, so as they knew there was a God, and that he was most wise, good, just, punishing the bad, and doing good to the good ; and that this God ought to be worshipped according to his Will : but they worshipped him not as God, nor conceiving of him as God ought to be conceived of , nor giving him that Glory which was suitable to his Infiniteness , and divine perfections ; and so were unthankful to God for those blessings which they had received ; which caused God to punish that Ingratitude of theirs , by delivering them up to all manner of uncleanness , and brutish lusts , *ver.*

*Mar. 4. 28.*

*Joh. 15. 1, 2.*

*Text*

*Expectata  
seges vanis  
eluxit ave-  
nis. Virg.*

*Doct.*

*Rom. 1. 21.*

*Ver. 25 26.*

25. 26. A fearful punishment indeed, none greater can be inflicted, out of the place of torment.

But what speak we of the Gentiles? Ingratitude is not all without the Pale; In God's own Vineyard it may be found.

Deut. 37.  
7, — 19.  
Explained.

Hear what *Moses* speaks at large unto the poynt, *Deut.* 37. 7. — 19. God had done much for his people *Israel*, never more (no not so much) for any Nation under Heaven; His mercies are mentioned and declared, first, more *Generally*, ver.

Eze. 20. 6.

Exod. 19.

15.

Isa. 12. 25.

1 Pet. 2. 9.

Deut. 7. 78.

8, 9. *When the most High divided to all Nations their Inheritances*, that is, to those seventy Nations reckoned *Gen.* 10. He expelled out the Land of *Canaan* (which was the Glory of all lands, *Ezek.* 20. 6.) for those seventy souls of *Israel*, mentioned, *Gen.*

46. 27. *Deut.* 10. 22. these were to him as *his portion and peculiar Inheritance*, *Exod.* 19. 15. *Isa.* 19. 25. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. them he made choice of, above all people of the World, for his; yet not for any desert of theirs, but out of his own meer

love, *Deut.* 7. 78. Then more particularly he reckons up the blessings and mercies bestowed on them, ver. 10, 15. he found them in a desert Land, and in the wast howling *Wildernesse*; that is, *Jacob's* posterity whom he found, and was present with, in the desert *Wildernesse*, a place of howling of wild beasts, where

were no Inhabitants, no dwelling City, no food to sustain them, *Psal.* 107. 4, 5. *Jer.* 2. 6. there God found them, that is, provided for them, and sufficed their necessities (so the Greek translate it, and so the word is used, *Numb.* 11. 22.) This

Ans<sup>r</sup>. in  
loc.

mercy *Moses* had put them in mind of before, *Deut.* 8. 15. and *David* remembers, *Psal.* 136. 16. He instructed him, and that both by his word and works; or by his Law and Spirit, as

Deut. 8. 15.

Pf. 136. 16.

Neh. 9. 13,

20.

*Neh.* 9. 13, 20. He kept him as the Apple of his Eye, that is with all diligent care and love, the Apple of the Eye being the tenderest piece, of the tenderest part; keep me, saith *David*,

Psal. 17. 8.

Zach. 2. 8.

as the Apple of thine Eye, *Psal.* 17. 8. that is, with all care and ten erness, so God doth his people, as we read *Zach.* 2.

8.

The Grace and favour of God towards this people is set forth by an excellent *Allegory*, ver. 11, 12. As an Eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him, &c. He

stirred



stirred up this people with his word and promises, ( as the Eagle doth her nest, that is, her young ones, with her cry ), and that whilst they slept in their sin in the Land of *Egypt*, as is declared by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, 20, 5, 6, 7. he fluttered over them as the Eagle doth over her young, by the motion of his blessed Spirit, in their hearts. So the word is used, *Gen.* 1. 2. the Spirit of God moved ( or fluttered ) upon the face of the waters; He spread abroad his Wings, hovered, and covered them with his divine protection, as the Eagle doth her young. And he took them, and did *bear them on his wings as the Eagle doth her young*, ( and not between her Talons as other birds do, saith *Munster* ); he was choise and chary of them, ( as *Moses* shewed, *Exod.* 19. 4. ) securing them from all other enemies, who could do them no more hurt then one can do to the young ones of the Eagle, when they are upon her wings, and she soaring aloft in the aire with them. All this did God for them; And *there was no strange God with him*, ver. 12. neither with this great God, to help him; nor with *Israel* to help them. He was their onely Leader, and did all by his own power, and therefore he liked it not, that any should share with him in his Glory, and service; And all this he did for them before they were possessed of that good Land. And after that he had brought them unto it, and placed them in it, he made them *ride upon the high places of the Earth*, ver. 13. that is, to subdue and triumph over the most defended and high-walled Cities: ( or riding is sometimes used in Scripture for conquering and subduing; *Psal.* 45. 4. & 66. 12. *Revel.* 6. 2. ) He blessed them with plenty, and abundance, as with the *fruits of the field* yea he made the most barren places fruitful to them, the *craggy and stony rocks* to yield them delicacies, *Hony and Oyl*, and the meat that they did eat was of the best; *Butter of Kine*, and *Milk of sheep*, with fat of *Lambs*, &c. ver. 14. with the *fat of Kidneys*, of *Wheat*, with the very best of the best. And they drank of the best too, of the *pure blood of the Grape*, that is, of the juice of the Grape, which is red, coloured like blood, so *Psal.* 45. 8. and such was the best wine in that Land: By these seven things, *Hony Oyl, Butter, Milk, Fat flesh Fine Bread and Wine*. ( under which number all other are comprehended ) *Moses* comprehendeth the mani-

*Ezek.* 20. 5,  
6, 7.  
*Gen.* 1. 2.

*Munst. in  
schol. in oc.  
Exo.* 19. 4.

*Psal.* 45. 8.

# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

fold blessings which the people of *Israel* enjoyed in that Land; Thus, every way, God deserved well from this people.

Now what requital did they make to God, for all this? *Jeshurun* was fat, &c. *ver. 15.* that is, This my people whom I fly led righteous, and should have been *Jeshurun*, (that is *righteous*, or *upright before the Lord*) abused this my bounty, and turned my grace into wantonness, being pamper'd by this my merciful provision, *kicked with the heel*; as young Mules, which, when they have suck'd, kick the Damm's dug; they carried themselves rebelliously against me, *forsaking God that made them*, by creating and advancing them; yet they forsook his service, and *lightly esteem'd the rock of their salvation*, that is, the mighty God, who is a firm foundation to his Church, *Math. 16. 18.* Him they lightly esteem'd, and foolishly despised, and *provoked him to jealousy with strange Gods*, &c. *ver. 16.* that is, they exceedingly angered him, (for *jealousy is the rage of a man*, *Prov. 6. 34.*) with the service of their Idols, (as the Psalmist hath it, *Psal. 78. 18.*) And indeed in serving them they served Devils and *sacrificed to them*, and not to God, *ver. 17.* For what are Idols but Devils? *1 Cor. 10. 20.* These were their Gods whom yet *they knew not*, nor their Fathers feared not; such Gods were these Idols which they served, which could neither do good, nor evil; (as is said of them *Jer. 10. 5.*) Thus they were *unmindfull of the Rock that begat them*, and *forgat God that formed them*, *ver. 18.* So before, *ver. 6.* In all these respects *Moses* (there) sharply rebukes them by way of Interrogation, and Question; *Do you thus require the Lord?* &c. i. e. *with such pride, contempt, iniquity and impiety*, this is a woful requital indeed; but thus and no other way did they require God's love and bounty.

A like complaint we have, of the unthankfulness of this people, made by God himself, *Isa. 1. 2, — 5.* *Heaven and Earth* are summoned to hear it, (as *Moses* had done before, *Deut. 32. 1.*) they are called in to bear witness; God declares against this people, puts in his Bill against them for their horrible Ingratitude: Shewing, first, what he had done for them. He had allotted them to be his *Children*, who were by nature Children of wrath, (as all are); and, passing by all others, chosen them to be

Mar. 16.  
18.

Pro. 6. 34.  
Pl. 78. 18.

1 Cor. 10.  
12.

Jer. 10. 5.

Isa. 1. 2, — 5.  
Explained.



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be a peculiar people to himself, *Exod. 4. 22.* Secondly, he had *nourished them* when they were young, as we read, *Hos. 11. 3.* *I taught Ephraim to go, &c.* and provided for them in *Egypt*, in the wilderness of *Canaan* (as we heard in the former Instance). Thirdly, he had *brought them up*, and made them every way great; They had good education under such Laws and Statutes as no people under Heaven had the like, *Deut. 4. 5, 9. Rom. 9. 4, 5.* (And to these three heads, all other mercies shewed to them, may be referred). Now, what requital made they for these mercies, *they have rebelled against me* (saith God) that is, rose up in arms against me, (as *Abjolom* did against his Father) such was their Rebellion, as that the like was not to be found in the worst and dullest sort of Creatures; For *the Oxe knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters crib, but Israel doth not know, &c.* *ve s. 3.* Four Epithetes he gives them which loades them sufficiently with guilt. *A sinful Nation, a People laden with iniquity; a seed of evil Doers, Children that are Corrupters:* And lest they may be thought to be overcharged, he mentions their Particular Crimes by a Logical gradation of three degrees; *They have forsaken the Lord, They have provoked the Holy one of Israel to anger, Thy are gone away backward.* Such a requital, and no better did they then make. And the same Prophet (yet more excellently and elegantly) sets it forth in a song which he made in the behalf of his *Beloved*, *Isa. 5. 1, —8.* (which I shall here but touch, having given a large exposition thereupon.) Indeed, it speaks fully to the point delivered, under the Parable of the Vineyard, planted in a very fruitful Hill, strongly fenced in, weeded, watched, watered, pruned, and every way well husbanded, and cultur'd by the care and cost of the painful Husbandman, so that nothing was wanting that was requisite to the fructifying of it. Yet after all this paines and cost bestowed it could not be wonn to bring forth any thing but *wild and stinking Grapes*; such was the State and condition of the Church of *Israel* and *Judah*, (for to them it was proposed and applyed *vers. 7.*) God had planted them in a very fruitful Land, the *Land of Promise*, the plenty and pleasures thereof, we read, *Deut. 8. 7, 8, 9 & 11, 11.* He fenced them from spoyles by his mighty protection, his eyes were alwayes upon it and

Deut. 4. 8,  
9.  
Rom. 9. 4,  
5.

Isa. 5. 1, —  
8.  
See my Ex-  
pos. on the  
Strange  
Vineyard.

Deut. 8. 7,  
8, 9, & 11,  
11, 12.

## The Figg-les Figg-Tree.

them, from the beginning of the year to the end of it, Deut. 11. 12. This was that hedge which Moses calls the refuge and defence of Israel, the shield of their help, and the sword of their glory, Deut. 33. 28, 29. He cast out the stones that were in it, and cleansed the soyle, in driving out the Nations before them, the Canaanites and Hittites &c. Psal. 44. 2, & 80. 8. Having thus cleansed the soyle, he planted it with the choyssest plants, the seed and posterity of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; and from amongst them made choyce of the best, some to Rule and Govern them, some to Teach and Instru& them, others to Minister in the house the Lord, and every one of them to serve God and benefit the publike, in his severall place and calling.

And for the further safety and defence thereof, He built a Tower in the midst thereof, not in a corner, or by-place of the Vineyard, but where it might be most conspicuous, and that not onely for the beauty of it, but for a Watch and Guard unto it; that it might be a defence and preservative to them that were within it: By which, some understand Jerusalem the great and Metropolitan City of the Jews (spoken of, Psal. 122. 1. or as others, the Temple that was builded therein by Solomon, Psal. 87. 70.

And that nothing might be wanting, in this his Vineyard; He sets up a Wine presse therein, that when the grapes were come to their full ripenesse, they might be improved to an useful Vintage, which may be understood of the Altar in the Temple, upon which they were to offer the fruit of their freewill offerings, Psal. 51. 19. Or (which seemes most probable) the Exercise of that godly Discipline; in the use thereof, the sweet juyce of holinesse and righteousness was wrung out of them, under the government of those godly Kings and Princes, Priests and Prophets, Judges and Captains which the Lord had raised up, and placed over them; of which we may read at large in the Books of Joshua, Judges, and the Kings; All which being laid together, God might justly appeal to their own consciences, and make them Judges in the case. *what could have bin done more to my Vineyard that I have not done* vers. 4. And now what did God expect from this his Vineyard, in lieu of all these his favours shewed unto it, and paines taken with it? Surely no other

Deut. 33.  
28 29.

Psal. 44. 2.  
& 80. 8.

Psal. 78.  
71, & 99, 6.

Psal. 122.  
1.  
Psal. 87.  
70.

Psal. 51. 19.  
19.



other then what every man that planteth a Vineyard, expects from his plants ; *I looked for grapes*, ver. 2. fruits natural and proper for a Vine ; But how his expectation was answered, the words following shew, *It brought forth wild, rotten, and unwholesome grapes*. He expected *judgment*, but found *Oppression*, *Righteousnesse*, but beheld a *cry*, the fruit and effect of that venomous fruit of *Oppression*, ver. 7. In the *rich* was found *Covetousnesse*, ver. 8. In the *Voluptuous*, without *debauchednesse*, ver. 11. A settled *purpose to do evil* in the *Impenitent*, ver. 18. *Impudency* and *desperate impiety* in *prophane ones*, ver. 20. And in their own waye *self conceitednesse*, ver. 21. yea a *Gloriation* in thir riotous *excesse of wickednesse*, ver. 22. Such was the requital which they made to that good God, who had so well deserved at their hands.

And lest we might think, that this Ingratitude was to be found onely in the Israelitish Vineyard, our blessed Saviour transfers these things to us, (who live under the Gospel) and to our use in another Parable (wherein he alludeth unto this former) *Math. 21, 23.—40.* There was a *Certain Husbandman* *der which planted a Vineyard, and hedged it round about* &c. The same Ingratitude is to be found amongst us, that was amongst them, yea, in a higher degree. we *beat his Servants* that he sends to us for his Rents, *kill one, stone another*, nor have we spared his own Son, whom he hath sent amongst us, but have *by our wicked hands crucified and slain him* : yea, so spitefully are many set against him, as that they could find in their hearts to *crucifie him again*, if it lay in their power ; and make him a mocking-stock to all the World by their open prophaneſſe, and shamefull revolt from him : Horrible height of Ingratitude !

Besides these general instances, many particulars might be mentioned, whereby the truth delivered might be confirmed, as in *Saul*, 1 Sam. 15. 17, 18, 19. *David* 2 Sam. 12. 7, 8. and in good *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. 32. 26. all these are charged with Ingratitude, in not rendering to God according to what they had received. And that mentioned by St. Luke 17. 18. would not be forgotten ; Ten Lepers were cleansed, and but one of them found that returned thanks to God, and he a Stranger. A Sa

maritane

*Labruscas.  
uva putida  
Pagnin.*

*Math. 21.  
33.—40.*

*Acts 2. 23.*

*Heb. 6. 6.*

*1 Sam. 1.  
15. 17, 18,  
19.  
2 Sam. 12.  
7, 8.  
2 Chron.  
32. 26.  
Lk. 17.  
18.*

*maritake*; He onely was the *Figure* (saith one) the other nine the *Cypher*: Thus you have heard the point largely proved, now hear it applyed.

Use 1.

*Toto divi-  
fos orbe  
Britannos.*

*Plin. in  
Paecyrr.*

Our English Nation stands deeply guilty of this sin, God hath done as much for us, as ever he did for *Israel*; he hath cholen us out from all the Earth, and severed us after a sort from all the World; that we might be a pattern of his bounty. He hath setled this our English Vineyard in a *very fruitful Hill*, eminently *Fat*, and *Fertile*, richly provided of all trustful Commodities. Infomuch that as *Pliny* (the younger) writes of *Egypt*; She was wont to boast that she owed nothing to any Forraign streames, for her fertility, being abundantly watered by the sole inundation of her own River *Nilus*; The same may this our little Island say (in some sort); for she hath moisture enough in her own shell; Other Nations stand in more need of us, then we of them.

We have bin throughly *fenced in* (as the mount was within the *Royles*) with the hedge of divine protection, which hath bin as a brazen wall about us; Never had Land more convincing proofs of Omnipotent tuition, both against Forraign Powers, and Home-bred Conspiracies, than ours. It is hard (saith a Reverend Prelate of our Church) (who hath wrote a whole discourse of this Subject) to find any Precedent even amongst the people of God, (since the time wherein God shewed his miracles, in protecting the people of *Israel*;) that for so many years together have bin continually preserved and delivered from so many, so cruelly intended, so dangerous assaults as we have bin.

He hath *picked the Stones* out of this his Vineyard, Those Popish Laws and Statutes which did inhibit the worship of the true God; together with those false Doctrines of Popery and Heretical pravity; where with this our Land and Nation was formerly tainted, and made us a true Orthodox Church, eminent for purity of Doctrine, and reverend administration of the Sacraments.

He hath planted this his Vineyard with his *choyest plants*, Princes of the best for Learning and Piety; Judges of the best for Prudence and Gravity; Divines of the best for Soundnesse and

B. B. Carleton, his  
Thankful  
Rememb.  
of God's  
mercies.  
Epist. Ded.



and Integrity, &c. All of the best and choylest, inſomuch that no people under Heaven were able to compare with us herein.

Nor hath any *Watch-Tower* in the Chriſtian World bin better furniſhed with vigilant and careful watchmen than this, which he hath in his Engliſh Vineyard. Other Nations excell us in Glorious Buildings, Temples, &c. but for *Pulpits*, England hath the praiſe.

Nor do we want a *Winepreſſe* therein; godly and wholeſome diſcipline, in the execution whereof when man hath failed, he hath turned the ſcrew himſelf following us, ſometimes with Famine, ſometimes with Peſtilence, and lately with the Sword; that what is in us might be made known, and that he might fetch out ſuch juyce as might beſeem Repentance and new Obedience.

And now *Israel* what doth the Lord thy God require of thee? (as *Moses* ſometimes ſaid) ſo may I ſay to thee *O England!* Something (Queſtionleſſe) is expected that ſhould be returned, (though not as *Arripiatibz*, a *Recompence* for theſe Favours, yet as *Testimonies* and ſignes of *Thankfulneſſe*) to ſo good and gracious a God who hath ſo well deſerved of thee, which cannot be leſſe then fruit. *I looked for Grapes* (ſaith God of *Israel*;) ſuch as in *Nature*, *Quality*, and *Quantity*, may be ſomething anſwerable to his Love, Care, and Pains beſtowed: The like looketh he from us (without doubt); but what findeth he? what return have we made unto him?

Have we not (with *Israel*) deſpiſed the pleaſant Land, *Pſal.* 106. 24. That bleſſing of Peace, (the Child of Heaven) and Plency, (the Child of Peace) wherewith God hath promiſed to bleſſe his People, *Pſal.* 29. 11. and for which *David* ſo earneſtly prayed, *Pſal.* 122. 7. It hath bin undervalued by us, and vilified amongſt us; And the ſword (one of the deadlyeſt arrowes in God's quiver) preferred.

The fence which hath bin made about us, we have plucked up with our hands, and trampled upon with our feet. God's Laws are openly tranſgreſſed, and Mans's Laws cannot be heard for the noyſe of Drums and Cannons: our diſcords and contentions have layd open a wide gap, both for the *Beaſt of the Wood*, and for the *Fox of the Field*. Hence.

Deut. 10.  
12.

Iſa. 5. 4.

Pſal. 106.  
24.  
Pſal. 29. 11.  
Pſal. 122.  
7.

Thoſe

Those *Stones* of Popish Doctrine and Heretic, cast out and exploded by our Church (long since) are cast in again; and whilst we seemingly drive out Innovation and Popery at the fore-door, we let it in at the back; and have proved our selves to be the best Friends to it, that it hath found in *England* these many years.

Our *Watch-Towers* have bin empty, through our own wickedness and cruelty; how many of Gods faithful Watchmen have we beaten, and buffeted, flandered, and pillaged; cast out and Imprisoned, killed and murdered for a constant discharge of their duties, intelling *Israel* of their sins, and *Judah* of her transgressions?

Our *Winepresse* is broken down, in respect of humane Discipline; and whereas we complained of a bad one, now we justly may complain for want of One; God indeed hath set up his *Presse* amongst us, he hath scruzed us with many Judgments and Afflictions, but if you would know what liquor comes from us, take a taste from the mouth of a Prophet. What he said of *Israel* is too too true of this our English Nation. *Hos 4. 2. The Lord hath a Controversie with the Inhabitants of the Land, for that there is no truth nor mercy nor knowledge of God in the Land; What then? Swearing, Lying, Killing, Stealing, Whoring; and so we break out into horrible outrages, so that blood toucheth blood: murderers are so frequent, that there seems to be no intermission of blood shed: Is not all this spoken of our times (think you)? The waters of Egypt being turned into blood, were loathsome to the Egyptians, so that they could not drink thereof, Exod. 7. 20. 24. and whose soul doth not loath to taste of such liquor? I spare to speak of the Pride, Avarice, Luxurie, Contempt of Gods Ordinances, Violation of his Sabbaths; that is generally to be found amongst us.*

These be the fruits wherewith we require God for all his mercies, in planing, fencing, weeding, watching over us. O tell it not in Geth! How happy had it bin for us, if we had not given advantage to our enemies to censure our Profession, for these our foul enormities. *This is a Lamentation, and shall be for a Lamentation, Ezek. 19. 14.*

Hos. 4. 2, 3.

Exod. 7. 20,  
24.

2 Sam. 1.  
10.

Ezek. 19.  
14.



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But what is generally said of all, is as good as not spoken at all. I must weave my net a little closer, if I would fish successfully. Who is there amongst you all that hear me, that can wash his hands from the guilt and stain of this base Ingratitude? Besides the share that we have had in those general mercies before mentioned, (which have not bin small), Which of us all have not had many Particular mercies multiplied on him, by this our bountiful and gracious God? Who called thee from amongst the Pore, thy looty and soylie condition, to serve him? Who planted thee in that fruitful Hill, that Country, County, Town, Parish, Family, where thou enjoyest, so plentifully the meanes of grace, which many want? Who hath protected and defended thee from the Cradle to this hour; and when Father and Mother forsook thee, took the charge of thee? who hath cast out those stones which were naturally in thy heart, and cleansed thee from those soul luffs (mortifying and subduing them in some good measure, which did fight against thy soul)? Who was it that hath pruned thee, with so many fatherly Chastisements and Corrections, that thou mightest yet become more fruitful in a holy life and conversation? Who is it that loadeth thee daylie with his blessings, undeserved, undesired, unexpected, every morning, yea every moment renewed? Hath not this good and gracious God done all this for thee, and for every soul of us that stands here before the Lord this day? Add unto all this, that blessing of blessings; *Gift of all Gifts, his own Son*, who came down from Heaven; was born in poverty, lived in penury, dyed with intolerable pain and sorrow, and all to recover thee and me, from our willful fall, and to restore us to our former happiness.

Now what return have we made to God for all his mercies? Hath he not great cause to say of us as *David* of his enemies, *they have shewed me hatred for my good will, to the great grief of my Soul*? He expects Humility, and behold Pride, He looks for Love, and behold Envy; for Liberality, and finds Covetousnesse; for Mercy, and meets with cruelty; &c. *Do you so requite the Lord, O foolish People, and unkind*: We find a great complaint in Scripture of such Soyl, as brings forth *7 thorns and Weeds and Tares*; yet all these are good in their kind, and useful to the

T

wife;

Psal. 68.  
13.

Psal. 27.  
Ezek. 11.  
19. & 36.  
26.  
Isa. 4. 4.  
1 Pet. 2. 11.  
Joh. 15. 2.  
Psal. 68.  
19.

Joh. 4. 10.

Psal. 109.  
5.

Math. 13.  
27.  
Heb. 6. 8.

wife; but the worst fruit that the groaning Earth bears, is, *man himself*, our sinful and unprofitable selves, from whom God hath so long expected fruit, but after all his cost and pains when he looks for fruit, he finds none, or worse; bad fruit instead of good.

Use.

As this our Ingratitude should humble us for time past, so we should be stirred up for time to come, to make a better return to God, than hitherto we have made, that he may not be altogether deceived in his hopes: When Showrs fall on a Dunghil they cause stink; when in the Streets, dirt; if in desolate places, they bring up weeds: but if they fall in a Garden they produce herbs and flowres; If in a tilled Field, corn; If in an Orchard, fruit. If the soyl of our hearts be foul with uncleanness, rank with coverousnesse, sown with lusts, &c. the rain which now falls upon us, will cause an appearance of weeds in us; but if you bring hearts thither, like a well tilled Field, or cultured Vineyard, then you will recompense those Instructions which shall be given you with Increase of good fruit.

The ill requital that we have made to God for all the good we have received from him, hath bin in part discovered. Now give me leave to discover unto you the vilenesse of this vice [Ingratitude], that we may shun it, and hate it; And the rather, because we have bin foretold, that it is one of those sins that renders these *times perilous*.

1 Tim. 3. 1.

I am not able with the best skill I have, to draw it to the Life; and Anatomize it as I ought. Could we but see it in its own colours, we could not but detest it; I must desire you to rest satisfied with that rude draught of it, which I shall present unto you: And so first, take notice that it is a *Compounded sin*; it hath many poysonful Ingredients in it, which makes it extremely evil; and amongst others, these.

Isa. 27. 11.

First, *Ignorance*; and such an Ignorance as whereunto mercy is denyed, *Isa. 27. 11*. He that made them, will shew them no favour, being a people of no understanding, it being willful and affected: Thus God complains of *Israel*, *Isa. 1. 3*. *Israel doth not know*, and, *Hos. 2. 8*. *She did not know*; The meaning is, they would not know; they did shut their eyes, and would not acknowledge God to be the bestower of that good which they had;

Isa. 1. 3.

Hos. 2. 8.



had ; in that respect the *Oxe* and the *Ass* is preferred to *Israel*. It is worse then brutishnesse ; what Creature can you resemble an ungracelul Person unto ? unlesse it be to the Hog (who eats up the Acorns which fall from the Tree, and looks not up unto it). And yet though they look not up to the Tree, whereon the Mast did grow, they know their trough, and take notice of them that use to feed them at it.

Second y, *Idolatri* : Ingratitude doth not one'y passe by, without notice-taking of good bestowed, but ascribes all to others. Thus *Israel* atcribed all their plenty, their Bread, their Wine, their Wool, their Water, &c. to their *Lovers* or *Sweet-hearts*, that is, to their Idols and fallie Gods, *Hos. 2. 5.*

Thirdly, *Pride*, is another sinful ingredient, that goes to the composition of it : *Their hearts were exalted* (saith God of ungrateful *Ephraim*) *therefore have they forgotten me*, *Hos. 13. 6.* And this is rendered as the reason, why *Hezekiah* returned not to God according to that he had received, *his heart was lifted up in him*, *2 Chron. 32. 25.* There is no one thing in the world that causeth unthankfulnesse so much as *Pride*, *Psal. 73. 6.--10.* It is *Pride* that causeth a man to undervalue the Mercy, and to overvalue himself, as if he deserved berter ; thence it is, that God doth so often, and strictly warn *Israel* to beware of it. It is a sin that God *abhors*, *Prov. 6. 16.* and *resists* *Jam. 4. 6.* and no marvel, for it resists him ; other sins fly from God and decline him, but this opposeth him to his very face.

Fourthly *Envy*, that is the Daughter of *Pride*, and will wait upon her Mother ; where the one is, the other will be ; we grudge no men the praise of their kindnesse, but whom we envy and hate : And by experience we have found that true, which *Tacitus* saith of extraordinary favours, which lighting upon ill minds cause hatred instead of love ; whence arose that Proverb (so often in use), Save a Malefactor from the Gallows, and he will be the first that will condemn thee (if he can), as *Judas* did *Christ*, (who, as some say, had been (before he was called to be an Apostle) delivered by his means, being otherwise likely to have suffered for a flagitious offence). This *Envy* cometh in with her comparisons, disdaining that others should be equalized, (much lesse preferred) in bestowing and receiving gifts.

T 2

Thus

*Hos. 13. 6.*
*2 Chro. 32. 25.*  
*Psal. 73. 6.--10.*
*Deut. 8. 14. 17.*  
*Prov. 6. 16.*  
*Jam. 4. 6.*  
*1 Pet. 5. 5.*
*Nō potest quisquam et invidere et gratias agere. Sene.*
*Quo plus debent magis oderint. Senec. Ep. 19.*

Luk. 15.  
18, 19.

Thus the Elder Brother looke upon the younger Brother's entertainment with an evil eye, insomuch that he ticked not to charge his Father with unkindnesse, as if nothing at all had been done for him, albeit the Inheritance was his, *Luke 15. 18, 19.* It is our imbred enmity against God that maketh us so loath to acknowledge God, and his goodnesse towards us.

2 Sam. 12.  
3.  
Mal. 3. 8.

Fifthly, There is much of *Sacriledge* in it; The Ungrateful man robs God of that honour which is due unto him, and which he hath reserved to himself, (nor will he give it to any other): God is content that we should have the good of all, but the praise of all he looks to have himself. That, is as the Ewe that *Nathan* speaks of, in the Parable, which God puts in his own bosome: Will any man rob his God? he is a wretch that doth so; And such a wretch is the ungrateful person, who steales away God's Ewe-Lamb, having large flocks and herds of his own.

Psal. 73.  
11.  
Job. 21.  
25.

Job. 31. 28.  
Pl. 63. 21.

Sixthly, and lastly, There is *Atheism* in it. Thus those ungrateful wretches, mentioned by *Job*, whom God hath blessed with temporal abundance, ask, *What is the Almighty that they should serve him*, *Job 21. 25.* and should *Job* have been ungrateful towards God, for those blessings which he had received from him, he professeth plainly that he should have *denied the God that is above*, in so doing, *Job 31. 28.* An *unthankful heart* is an *Atheisticall heart* wherever it be found, *Psal. 73. 11.* Thus you see, what a bundle of sins are wrapt up in this one (albeit you have not seen the one half) which is enough one would think to make us abhor Ingratitude, But

Aquin 4.  
22. 106.  
Art. 2.

Secondly, It is a sin that all *Law* condemns. The Law of Nature is against it; For naturally every effect is brought back to its cause, (as all waters come out of the Sea, so all run thither again). Now God is the cause of all things, and persons, therefore *Nos, nostrasque*, whatsoever we have, and whatsoever we are, must be ascribed unto him. And shall not the Rivolets of praise and thankfulness return to that place from whence our benefits do spring? By Instinct of nature. Men have been thankful to *Beasts*, of whom they have gotten any good: So *Romulus* and *Rhemus* set up in *Rome* the Image of a *Wolf*, for a kind remembrance of that *Wolf* that did feed them with her Milk;

And



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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And *Beasts* have been thankful to *Men*. God sends the ungrateful to the *Oxe* and the *Ass*, to learn of them, *Isa.* 1. 3. And to *Birds* and *Beasts*, *Dogs* and *Lions*, we may send such, on the same errands. Of the *Stork* it is storied, that she offers the first fruit of her young ones to God, by casting one of them out of her nest, as Rent for her house-room. And of the *Elephant* it is reported, that, coming to feed, the first sprigg he breaks, he turns it towards Heaven in testimony of thankfulness: A poor *Spaniell*, that is fed with a bit and a knock, and now and then remembered with a crust of bread, how gratefully will he remember his Benefactor? (saith *Ambrose*). *Pliny* relates many memorable Instances of the fidelity of *Dogs* to their Masters, which are too long to recite: The like Gratitude we read in *Aulus Gell*: of a *Lion* out of whose foot a young man had pulled a stub, and cleansed the wound; the name of the man was *Androclus*, a Slave to a noble man in *Rome*, who had run away from his Master, and fled into the Desarts, where hapning into a Cave, a *Lion* comes to him, groaning and halting, offering to him his paw, grievously wounded with a stub; *Androclus* pulls it out, dresseth the wound, so that in a short time the *Lion* was cured; in recompence whereof, the *Lion* brought him every day a part of his prey for the space of three years: Afterwards, *Androclus* was taken, and sent to *Rome*, and there by his Master imprisoned. Not long after, this *Lion* was also taken alive, and sent thither, where he was kept (after their manner) for pastime; *Androclus* was condemned to combat with this *Lion*; and being brought out of prison, and put unto the *Lion*, expecting nothing but suddain death, the *Lion* came to him, and fawned on him, licking his hands, and feet, and would not hurt him; Hereupon the Emperour pardoned *Androclus*, set him free, and gave him the *Lion*; of whom the people usually said, *Hic est Leo hospes hominis*, *Hic est homo medicus Leonis*: This is the *Lion* that fed the man, this is the man that physickt the *Lion*.

The *Asp* is a venomous Creature; and yet we read in *Pliny* of an *Egyptian* that had one, that ordinarily came to his Table, and there took meat at his hand: This Serpent afterwards had young ones, and one of those young ones happened to sting one of

*Isa.* 1. 3.

*Amb. Hex-  
am.  
Plin. lib. 8.  
cay. 40.*

*Aul. Gel.  
noct. Attic.  
l. 5. c. 14.*

*Plin. l. 10.  
c 74.*

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of the *Egyptian's* Children, whereof it dyed; which when the old Alp perceived, she pre-ently kill'd the young one which did it, and afterwards, as ashamed of the wrong offered to her feeder, departed from the house, and never returned more. And the *Fish in the Sea* likewise, they say, are in their kind grateful: *Athenaus* (*lib. 13.*) reports, that *Milesius* having bought a Dolphin alive, and letting it go again into the Sea; afterwards, himself being cast away by shipwreck, and ready to perish in the midst of the Waves, that Dolphin took him, and carryed him to the shoar, and so preserved his life. Albeit I doubt of the truth of the Narration, yet I doubt not of this truth, that it is more then beastly Ingratitude to be ingrateful. These Instances I give you to manifest that Ingratitude is hateful to Nature even in the Creature, to the Creature: O! how detestable then is it in the Creature towards the Creator? *Common Morality* condemns it, and informs every common capacity of this common principle, *Suum cuiq;*, Let every one have his own. There is no book of *Ethicks*, of moral doctrine, that we meet withal, wherein there is not (almost in every leaf) some detestation, some *Anathema*, against Ingratitude. We owe God thanks in poynt of Morality and Honesty; as he is our bonifus Benefactor, and gives so liberally to all: Every benefit carries with it the force of an obligation (as we all confesse); let us receive one small kindnesse from another, we acknowledge our selves much bound unto him for it; and this the Heathens confesse. And then it is a due owing unto God in poynt of Covenant, *Psal. 50. 15.* *Call upon me* (saith God) *in the time of trouble; I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* Which Scripture (saith one) is a kind of Indenture, God is the Landlord. he demiseth a Tenement [ *I will hear thee in the time of trouble* ] but he requires Covenants from the Tenant: first a common Fine must be paid, [ *Call upon me* ]; And then a continuall Rent must be rendered, *Thou shalt glorify me*: Justice by Ingratitude is violated, and therefore carefully to be avoyded.

*Religion* and *Piety* will not own it, What is *Religion* (said the Orator) bu Gratitude to God? *Piety*, but Gratitude to Parents? *Loyalty*, but Gratitude to Princes, &c. Thankfulnesse to God is a *Religious Act*, part of that service whereby we worship

*Psal. 50.  
15.*



ship and honour him, *Pfal. 50. 23. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.* And it may, in some sort, be said to be a more excellent part of God's worship then Prayer, for that it is of a larger extent; we have many things to *praise* God for, which we never *prayed for*, (as for our Election, Preservation in our Infancy, and many other daily favours, which we begged not at God's hands; No, nor may pray for, as for this or that particular Affliction, which yet hapning unto us we are bound to blesse God for, it being a fatherly correction laid en us for our Amendment). Besides, it contributes more to God's glory, to acknowledge, by thanks, that *God hath given*, than to acknowledge by prayer that *God can give*. The one belongeth to them that seek, the other to them that have found what they sought, &c. Both *Suit*, and *Service* is owing unto God our Lord, *Prayer* and *Prayse*; and yet the last is that wherewith the Lord seems to be most delighted, as that whereby he is most honoured: Nor can that man be a Religious man, that doth neglect it, and is ungrateful. You see (then) in what state he stands that is Unthankful; he is *Outlawed*, both by the *Law Natural*, *Morall*, and *Spiritual*, which is the second Motive I commend unto you, which, being well considered, may teach us to avoyd Ingratitude.

2 Cor. 4. 15

Thirdly, Consider the *Recompence* and *Reward* of it; It provoketh revenge, both from *God* and *Man*: What the sin against the Holy Ghost is in *Divinity*, (saith one); the same is Ingratitude, in *Morality* a *sin unpardonsable*. It was said of *Alexander* that he exceeded all in Bountie; And of *Cesar*, that he exceeded all in Patience; yet it was observed, that the one did never give unto, and the other never forgive, an ungrateful Person. The *Laws of Persia*, *Macedonia*, and *Athens* condemned such to death, as required not a good-turn (it being in their power): For they judged, that such a one would not stick (in a very high degree) to neglect their friends, their Parents, their Country, their Gods; inasmuch as he that is unthankful is also *shamelesse*, and he that is not ashamed will not stick to commit any Villany. *Philip* of *Macedon* caused a Souldier of his, who offered unkindnesse to his Host, (who had courteously and plentifully entertained him, yet at his going away begged some

of

2 Sam. 10.  
4.

Ver. 5.

Ver. 6.

1 Sam. 27.

Ver. 14. 21.

of his Hott's lands), to be branded in the forehead, with these two words *Hospes ingratus*. But we shall not need to go down to the *Philistins* to sharpen our Mattocks; Scripture affords us Instances of Revenge justly taken (or at least intended to be taken) upon Ingratitude. *David* was highly incensed against the *Ammonites*, for that despight which they offered to his Messengers, whom he sent in kinnesse to visit their King, (after the death of his Father *Nabash*). They shaved off the one half of their Beards (saith the Text), and cut off their Garments in the middle, even to their Buttocks, and sent them away: The Beard is a *Naturall Ornament* of the Body, and so it was accounted in *Israel*; for had this trick of shaving the Beard (in use at this day, amongst the Romanists; and now in fashion amongst us) been the use in *Israel*, the Messengers needed not to have been ashamed (as they were), for they might more easily have cut off the other part of the Beard remaining (as one saith), than to have staid at *Jericho* till their Beards were grown, as they were enjoined to do. And the Garment is an *Artificiall Ornament* of the Body, which covers the nakednesse of it: In both the King of *Ammon* sought the disgrace of *David's* servants; which Ingratitude so stank in *David's* nostrils, that he revenged it with the slaughter and overthrow of seven hundred of their Chariots, and forty thousand Horsemen. And how greatly (and justly) was *David* exasperated against *Nabal* for his ungrateful carriage towards him? *David* had done much for him, in preserving all that he had, and being a defence unto him, and as a Wall unto all that was his, both by Night and by Day; (as *Nabal's* own Servants did testify). Now, *David* being in want in the wilderness, and hearing that *Nabal* made a feast for his Sheep-shearers, sends a friendly Message to him, desiring some relief from him, for himself and his, what he thought good himself, (not prescribing what he should send); an honest motion, and as easy for him to grant at such a time: But *Nabal* forgetting the kindness that he had received, doth not onely refuse to return kindness for kindness, but gives railing and reproachful words: *Who is David, or who is the Son of Ishai?* Why Churle, he is God's anointed; he that killed *Goliath*, and had defended the people o' God in general, from the *Philistins*: and



and that in *particular* had kept thee, in the wildernesſe, and done many courtesies for thee in *Carmel*: And it is one degree of Ingratitude, not to retain the memory of a Benefactor's kindnesſe. But he proceeds yet higher in ſlandering *David* and his cauſe, making him & all that were with him no better then Fugitives & Runnates from their Maſter: and ſo no. onely denyed *David* that courteſy which was deſired, but he reviles his Perſon, and condemns his Cauſe; and in ſo doing ſends him ſtones inſtead of Bread: which Ingratitude of his did ſo incenſe *David*, (albeit he had been long in the School of Patience & well prohi- ted therein) that he armeth himſelf to take revenge, and bindeth it with an Oath, that he wou'd ſlay all that belonged to *Nabal*, even to the *Dogg* that piſſeth againſt the Wall. And queſtionleſs had proceeded in his purpoſe, had not *Abigail* (*Nabal's* wife) met him by the way, and by her wiſdome pacified his wrath, and hindered him from his bloody intention: For which *David* bleſſed God, and acknowledged his providence therein, in ſend- ing *Abigail* out to meet him, and bleſſed *Abigail* as that In- ſtrument that was uſed to keep him from that bloody act, which was intended by him: And yet, notwithstanding that *David* ſpared this churliſh and ingrateful *Nabal*, God would not ſpare him for that his Ingratitude; he takes the matter into his own hand, and puniſheth *Nabal* with no leſſe puniſhment then the ſtroak of Death; yea, with a blockiſh and lenſeleſſe Death *his* heart dyed within him, and he became like a ſtone, whereat *David* rejoyced, and for which he bleſſed God, who had judged his righteous cauſe, in bringing the wickedneſſe of *Nabal* upon his own head.

And indeed, you ſhall find that Proverb to be moſt true, *Who- ſo rewardeth evil for good, evil ſhall not depart from his Houſe*, Prov. 17. 13. Plagues and Punishments from God (and ma- ny times from man alſo) light upon ſuch either in their Perſons, or Poſterity. God's wrath hath been revealed from Heaven a- gainſt it, and that in a very high degree, (as *Jeremiah* ſheweth by the Spirit of Prophecy, Jer. 18. 20, 21.) And if Ingratitude of man towards man be ſo hateful; what think you of man's Ingratitude towards God? Shall that ever eſcape unpuniſhed? Conſider adviſedly and give ſentence.

*Ver. 13.*
*Ver. 22.*
*Verſe.*  
23.—32.

*Ver. 33-34.*
*Ver. 37.*  
38.

*Ver. 39.*
*Pro. 17.*  
13.

*Jer. 18.*  
20, 21.

We read that when *Tamerlane* had overcome *Bajazet*, he asked him, If he had ever given God thanks for making him so great an Emperour? *Bajazet* replyed that he had never thought of that: It is no wonder then (said *Tamerlane*) that so unthankful a man should be made such a spectacle of misery, as thou now art. God will be unto such as forget him, a *Lion*, a *Leopard*, and as a *Bear robbed of her Whelps*, as it is threatned, *Hof. 13. 6, 7, 8.* And ungrateful *Israel* found it to be true, (as the whole Book of the *Judges* testifies). Sometimes he punisheth Privatively, in taking away his Mercies from us, as *Jer. 8. 13. Hof. 2. 9, 10, 11, 12. Revel. 2. 5.* And sometimes Positively, with Judgments Temporall, as *Numb. 14. 25, 28. Spirituall*, as *Rom. 1. 21.* and *Eternall*, as *Math. 25. 30.* Let this prevail with us, to beware of so foul an evil.

Lastly. Let us on the other side take notice of the Good of *Gratitude*, that so the ill of Ingratitude may the better be discovered.

There are but three heads whereto we refer all that is Good, *Jucundum, Utile, Honestum*; *Pleasure, Profit, and Honesty*: each of these (singly) we count Good; but when all these three concur we count that *Excellent*. Now, in this one Duty of Thankfulness all these meet, *Psal. 147. 1. O praise the Lord for it is good yea, it is a pleasant thing. and Praise is comely.* It is Good, as it brings Profit with it; and Profit (we know) is a very moving Argument. The Benefit is great that comes by Thankfulness unto us; for by it we retain the old, and invite new Mercies.

Blessings, already conferred on us, are retained and kept by our Thankfulness; no better way to preserve what we have than by being thankful for what we have.

And the thankful Acknowledging of Blessings invites new Mercies, as appears by that which *David* speaks, *Psal. 9. 10, 11.* So *Luke 17. 15.* that *Leper* which returned back to give God thanks, received a second time forgiveness of sins, *ver. 19.* There is nothing that obtaineth more of God than Agnition of favours received. Such a one, we say, deserveth to have kindness shewed him; he is so mindful of a good turn.

*Hof. 13. 6, 7, 8.*

*Jer. 8. 13.*

*Hof. 2.*

*9, — 13.*

*Rev. 2. 5.*

*Numb. 4.*

*25, 28.*

*Rom. 1. 21.*

*Mat. 25.*

*30.*

*Opposita,*

*juxta se po-*

*sita, magis*

*illucescunt.*

*Psal. 147.*

*1.*

*Gratiandi*

*actio est ad*

*plus dandū*

*invitatio.*

*Ps. 9. 10,*

*11.*

*Luk. 17.*

*15, 19.*



On the other side, Unthankfulnesse is a great loser; it forfeits all that hath bin by Prayer obtained, and stoppeth the course of Gods blessings; and dryeth up (as it were) his hand that he cannot stretch it forth to do us good: so we read, *Mark 6. 5.* Christ could do no mighty Works in his own Country, And why not there as well as elsewhere? their unthankfulnesse and ingratitude towards him, transfused as it were a dead Palsey into the hands of his Omnipotency; Such is the venomous nature of it. As David said of unthankful Nabal, *1 Sam. 25. 21*: So saith God of an unthankful Christian, In vain have I kept all that this fellow had in the wilderness, &c. So, in vain have I done so much for this ungrateful wretch.

Thankfulnesse, is good as being Pleasant, and delightful; It is the Exercise not onely of the dumb Creatures on Earth, but of the glorious Angels in Heaven, to give thanks unto the Lord, and praise his name, *Psal. 148. 2, 3, 8. Revel. 4. 8, 11, & 7. 11, 22.* Yea, there is more delight in this, then in Prayer, (saith Reverend and Humble Hooker) for the one hath pensiveness and fear, but the other joy annexed. But in Ingratitude there is no delight at all, nothing but envy, murmuring, and discontent: Serpents have venome within themselves, which they put forth to the hurt of others; but an ungrateful wretch hath his venome within him, wherewith he is tormented day-lie.

Lastly, Gratitude is an honest and comely Good: Nothing doth more commend a man to God and Men, than it, *Luke 17. 15.* But Ingratitude is a foul and ignominious thing, It leaves an aspersiō on the name and fame of a man, no vice greater: so did the very Heatlens judge of it, they counted it for the foulest imputation that could be layd upon a man, to say, He was Ungrateful; Term him so, and you have called him all the fowl names that may be. It overflowed all other particular vices; No other vice could get a name amongst them where that was; it swallowed all, devoured all, and became all. So e I am, that our Saviour joynes these two together, the unthankful, and the evil, *Luke 6. 35.* the unthankful man hath his brand to be a naughty man; and Sr. Paul sets the unthankful and unholy together in that bead-roll of vicious Persons, *2 Tim. 3. 2.* inti-

*Si cessat  
Gratiarum  
recursus,  
cesset grati-  
arum de-  
cursus.*  
Bern.  
*Mark 6. 5.*

*1 Sam. 25.  
21.*

*Psal. 148. 2,  
3, 8.  
Revel. 4. 8,  
11, & 7. 11,  
22.*

*Luke 17.  
15.*

*Ingratum  
dicas omnia  
dixisti.  
Senec. de  
Benific.*

*Luk. 6. 35.*

*2 Tim. 3. 2.*

mating in what esteem they are to be had amongst us. Lay altogether, and then tell me if we have not great cause, not onely to bewayl our former Ingratitude, but for the future to be ware lest we be charged with it, which we cannot avoyd, unlesse we make some thankful return to God for all his Favours bestowed.

*Object.*  
Psal. 50.7.

—14.  
Psal. 16.2.

*Resp.*  
Mich. 6.

Psal. 50.  
14.

But God's gifts are free, he gives and looks for nothing again, *Psal. 50.7, — 14. Psal. 16.2.*

God looks for nothing to be done by us, by way of *Exact Recompence*; *Thousand of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oyl* cannot do that; but something he expects should be done by us by way of *acknowledgement*, and declaration of his goodness and care of us, *Psal. 50. 14.* and that for the good of others. *I will publish the name of the Lord* (saith *Moses*, Deut. 32.3.) *Ascribe ye greatnesse unto our God.* We must report, that they who hear may give glory to the God of Heaven. He that makes a Clock, bestowes all that Labour on the several Wheels, that thereby the Bell might give a sound, and the Hand shew to others how the time passeth away: so this is a Principal of that Thankfulness which God requireth of us, that we make an open declaration of his mercies, for the winning and confirming of our Brethren.

Secondly, Our best Retributions being proportioned to the infinitenesse of his merits, may justly be esteemed *Nothing*: What is a Pepper-corn, to the worth of a large Farm? God looks but for thanks for the large mercy we hold of him; and what is that, but *Nothing*? *Gratias dicere est Gratias facere* (saith *August*), To utter our thanks to God is all our performance of thankfulness.

And yet, we must not think that *Gratitude* lyes wholly in the *Tongue*; As if a general acknowledgement of God's favours, or recounting of some eminent mercies were sufficient, when in the meantime our *Hearts* are far from him, and our lives are wicked and unreformed: *Thanking of God* is a thing that most do, and yet few do as they should: *Bernard* in his time complained, that *Deo Gratias*, God be thanked, was made as it were a *By word*, as it is amongst many of us at this day, who being asked about the health and welfare of our Selves and Friends,

usually



usually come with *God be thanked*, and *God be praised*; when their lives are wicked and unreformed: There I may remembre to some pritty Birds that are painted on Cloaths, that hang upon the walls in some Ale-houses; which have good sayings in their mouths, as, *Be sober, and watch, Fear God, Honour the King, Pray continually*; But Drunkenesse, Swearing and Vomiting is in the Room or at the Table. Such a pritty *Peacock* was that boasting Pharisee of whom we read in the Gospel, *Luke 18. 11.* He came with *God I thank thee* in his mouth. And many other had *Hosanna* between their lips one day, that the next cried *Crucifixe him, Crucifixe him*. Such praise in the mouths of wicked ones is no more acceptable unto God; then *Hail Master* was in the mouths of those who spat in the face of Christ, and buffeted him with their fist. It adds unto our Ingratitude and makes it more vile, inasmuch as we do not onely withhold from God his right, which is *Sacrilege*; but we add *Hypocrisie* unto it; take his name in vain, and mock him for his kindnesse, doing that in good earnest, which boyes do in sport; we stand upon our *heads*, and shake our *heels* towards Heaven: At least we are like some crafty and dishonest Tenant, which makes a kind of tender of Rent, and when we have done we sweep it up again, and go our wayes: Give me leave therefore (before I end the Point) in a word or two, to shew you wherein true *Gratitude* consists, and what is expected from him, that would approve himself to God, to be truly thankfol.

Thankfulnesse is either in *Affection*, in *Profession*, or in *Action*: Thankfullnesse in *Affection*, is when we heartily accept of the benefit bestowed, think our selves indebted for it, and heartily desire to make some return to redisse it, *Psal. 116. 12, & 103, 1, & 111, 1.*

Thankfulnesse in *Profession*, is, when we make known the benefit received to others, praise the Giver, and vow or promise to requite it according to our Power, *Psal. 22, 22, & 45, 1, & 66, 16, 17 & 71, 24.*

Thankfulnesse in *Action* is, when any convenient or beseeching Recompence or return is made for the benefit received, (be it more or lesse:) *Psal. 116. 13, & 138, 2. Prov.*

3. 9.

Luke 18.  
11.

John 12,  
13, & 19,  
15.  
Math. 26.  
40.  
Vers. 67.

*Habere  
Gratias  
corde.  
Psal. 116.  
12, & 111,  
1.  
Agere gra-  
tias ore.  
Psal. 22.  
22, & 45,  
1, & 66,  
16, 17, &  
71, 24.  
Reserre  
gratias spe-  
re.  
Psal. 116.  
13, & 138.  
2.  
Prov. 3. 9.*

He

# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

He that would be truly thankful, must manifest his thankfulness all three ways; in *heart*, by *word*, and by *deed*; Our *Hearts* must lead the way, our *Tongues* must follow our *Hearts*; and our *Hands* our *Tongues*. Our *Hearts* are the *Fountain* of every good Action, there must it be *originally*. The *Tongue* is the *Messenger* of the *Heart*, there it must be *declaratively*: The *Life* is the *manifestor* of the truth of both, there it must be *Actually*.

Recogniti-  
on.

Psal. 107.

13.

Psal. 68.

14.

Numb.

11. 6.

Psal. 106.

24.

Commemo-  
ration.

Psal. 117.

2.

Psal. 78. 4.

6.

Psal. 22.

22, 23.

Mash. 12.

34.

Retributi-  
on.

Psal. 50.

ult.

When we call to mind, and keep in mind Gods favours bestowed on us; when we highly prize them according to their goodnesse, and put a right estimate upon them, stirring up our souls to thankfulness (as *David* did) then *Gratias Habemus*, we have thanks in our hearts for God, or we have thankful hearts to God. For want of this *Israel* was blamed, *Numb.* 11. 6. *Psal.* 106. 24. *Think* and *Thank* God, is a good *Motto*.

When we confesse Gods goodnesse, and with our lips set forth his praise; when we publish abroad the loving kindnesse of the Lord, and tell our Children what God hath done for us, and provoke others to this duty, then *Gratias agimus*; we give thanks to God with our Tongues; *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*.

When we expresse a thankful heart in our lives, using these blessings which God hath bestowed on us to the right end, improving Gods gifts to the Giver's honour; when we lead a godly life, and *order our conversation aright*, and abound in good works, then *Gratias referimus opere*, we return thanks to the God of Heaven by our lives.

In short, that *Gratitude* is *grateful* and acceptable to God, whose *Root* is in the *Heart*, *Blossomes* in the *Tongue*, and *Fruit* in the *Hand*: whose *Root* is *Faith*, *Blossomes* *Praises*, and *Fruit*, *Good Works*. Blossoms in the lips may soon be blown away with a breath, it is a fading thing; but when the heart and life is thankful, that pleaseth God better *then a Sacrifice that hath borne or hooffe*, *Psal.* 69. 30, 31.

Psal. 39. 30,  
31.

Object.

But what if one be not able? We would pay God this Rent and Tribute of thanks, but we have not wherewith.

There



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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There are but few Tenants, so *impudent* (saith one) as to say, They will pay no Rent; Indeed, many pretend that they are to *impotent* that they cannot pay. To these, I give this Answer.

*Resp.*

First, God is no hard Landlord, he letteth out his Farm or Vineyard at such a Rent, that the Farmer may live well upon it. You read (*Cant. 8. 11.*) that *a thousand pieces of silver* were to be paid for Rent of the Vineyard, but yet *two hundred pieces* were allowed to them that kept the Fruit; (which was a great gain): So, *Math. 21. 33.* they could pay, but would not.

*Cant. 8. 11.*

*Math. 21. 33.*

Secondly, Gratitude will be casting about, and projecting what to return. *Isa. 32. 8.* *He deviseth*, studieth, meditateth how he shall compass his Rent; how to pay it: So, *Psal. 116. 12.* The word of God will help those that are inquisitive, and give directions; and the Works of God will furnish us. We read in the Gospel of a *Fish* that brought money in the mouth to *Peter*, *Math. 17. 27.* wherewith he payed Tribute. There is not a *Fowl* in the Heavens, a *Fish* in the Sea, a *Beast* on the Earth; nor any *worm* that crawles upon the Earth, but brings something in the mouth of it, to help a thankful heart towards the payment of that Rent which is due to God; *Persius* found it in a *foul Toad*, which when he saw, he wept, and being asked the reason why he wept, he answered, he bewailed his Ingratitude, who served not the Lord as he ought, who had made him a Man; and not a Toad.

*Isa. 32. 8.*  
*Psal. 116. 27.*

*Math. 17. 27.*

Thirdly, He is not alwayes unthankful who doth not *Pari referre*, recompence a benefit; but he would not, although he could. *Furnius* told *Augustus* (who had multiplied favours on him) that in one thing he had damnified him, yea, undone him; You have done so much for me (saith he) that I must live and dye unthankful; that is, without shewing my thankfulness, by equivalent recompences.

Fourthly, Where there is an endeavour and desire to testify the thankfulness of our hearts, and to make requital in the best manner that we can; God accepts of it. We read that the *Grecians* in a great solemnity, did present to *Philip of Macedon* many goodly gifts; amongst others, a *Painter* presented him with his own Picture in a Table, set forth with many Pearls and

and Jewels, artificially drawn, and over every Jewel was inscribed *Vellem & hoc*, I would I were able to give such gifts as these; So saith the Thankful heart; I would I could render more and better. To be thankful in affection, when there is no more in our Power, is true thankfulness, which hath ever a care to professe and perform, so far as it can.

Fifthly, Where other abilities are wanting, let us still make our thankful acknowledgements I can never give to God sufficient thanks, (said the moral man); yet I will ever acknowledge that I cannot give Him thanks sufficient.

Sixthly, And having nothing else to give, give him *thy self*, as *Eschines* did to *Socrates*, who receiving great rewards from his Schollars for his reading to them; This *Eschines* being a poor Auditor of his, and having nothing else to give, told him *Quod unum habeo, meipsum tibi dono, &c.* I bestow my self upon thee, having nothing else to give thee: this *Socrates* took so kindly, that he answered him, *Habebo curam ut tibi reddam meliorem, quam accepi*; I will have a care to restore thee better to thy self, than I received thee. To this return we are exhorted, *Rom. 12. 1.* And it will be to our great advantage to make such a Retribution unto God. To conclude, I have read of a poor *Spaniard* of *Sevil*, to whom a Father of the inquisition sent for some Pears growing in his Hort-yard; The poor man presently (for fear) pluckt up the Tree, Root and Branch, with all the fruit thereon, and sent him. What sudden fright and fear made him to overdo, &c. let our Cordial Gratitude to our good God cause us to do most chearfully, to offer up the whole man unto him, *Soul and Body*. Oh! that God might find such a return from us; then would it not be said of us, as of this Figg-Tree, *He came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*

*Use.*

I have yet one word more to say to you, from the point propounded; for if God be so ill required, where he hath well deserved, let us not think strange, nor be discontented, if we meet with the same measure. *David* complained much of it, *Psal. 35. 12.* and elsewhere: So in these dayes it is a general complaint, Never any (say some) were so dealt withall: So sometimes a Father complaining of a wretched Son, Never (I think) had Father such

*Rom. 12.  
1.*

*Mr. Thomas  
Fuller.*

*Psal. 35.  
12.*



such a Son as I have: The Son straightway replies, yes, my Grandfather had. Thou mayest apply this unto thy self: consider how ungrateful thou hast bin unto thy God, and it may cause thee to bear patiently the injuries that are offered to thee in that kind. But I forbear pressing this, having held you very long in the point, but the necessity of it may excuse the prolixity; it being one of those sins which make the times so perillous,  
2 Tim. 3. 1.

2 Tim. 3. 1.

{ Then said he unto the Dresser of the Vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this Figg Tree, and find none; Cut it down, why cumberest it the Ground? &c.

Text.  
Vers. 7.

The former Proposition is here *Prosecuted*, and the manner of proceeding with this barren Figg-Tree, is, in these and the words following, pecified, wherein we have;

First, An *Expostulation* with the Dresser of the Vineyard, about the Barrenesse of the Tree; in the words now read [*Then said He, &c.*] Secondly, The *Intercession* which was made by the Dresser on the behalf of that Figg-Tree, *vers.* 8. 9.

In the *Expostulatory* part we shall take notice, First, of the *Person* Expostulated with, [*The Dresser of the Vineyard*]. Secondly The *Subject* matter of it, [*Behold, these three years I come, seeking fruit on this Figg Tree, &c.*] We begin with the first.

*Then said he unto the Dresser of the Vineyard.*

Text.

This Dresser was an Angel (saith *Athanasius*). So *Theophylact* conceives it may be understood: It is true, the Angels *pitch their Tents* about the Vineyard of the Lord, and do many good offices unto it, and for every Figg-Tree planted in it; yet we do not read that they *Digg* about it and *Dung* it, as this Dresser mentioned in the Text promised to do; most conclude,

*The Ministers of the word and Sacraments are the Dressers of the Lord's Vineyard*: To them God hath in a special manner committed the care of it, and put them in trust to tend it, and to dresse it; and that shall be our Note.

Doct.

Joh. 15. 1.  
John 13.  
30.  
Jer. 1. 10,  
18, 9.  
Ezek. 3.  
17.  
Math. 28.  
19, & 16,  
19.  
Joh. 20. 23.  
1 Cor. 3. 9.  
Eph. 4. 11.  
2 Tim. 4. 2.  
1 Pet. 5. 2, 3  
Heb. 13. 7.  
Quest. 1.

God himself is said to be the *Husbandman* of the Vineyard, *John 15. 1.* And *Christ* the *Master-Dresser*; for He and His Father are one, *John 10. 30.* But notwithstanding this, in a *Subordination*, the *Ministers of God* in their several times and places are truly said to be the *Dressers* of it. So were the *Prophets* in their dayes, *Jer. 1. 10, & 18, 9. Ezek. 3. 17.* And the *Apostles* and *Evangelists* in theirs, *Math. 28. 19, & 16, 19.* (the *Keyes* of the Vineyard is put into their hand, *John 20. 23. 1 Cor. 3. 9.*) And so *We*, their *Successors*, in ours. *Ephes. 4. 11, 11.* To us is the like charge given that we take the like care, *2 Tim. 4. 2. 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. Heb. 13. 7.* we are joyned in the same holy work, (albeit in an inferior order.)

But why doth the Omnipotent God depure frail men to this Office? Why not the Angels? Why not some of those glorious *Cherubims* and *Seraphims*, who attend about His Throne continually, and are ready to execute his will and pleasure?

*Resp.*

It is not safe for us to be over-busie, in demanding a reason of Gods proceedings; It is enough for us to know, that it is the good will and pleasure of God to have it so. And yet in many things, he gives us both *liberty* to enquire with sobriety, and *light* to find out, so much as may give us reasonable satisfaction: To satisfie you (then) in this thing; There are divers Reasons that may be rendered, why the Omnipotent and Wise God imposeth this Charge, not on the Glorious and Celestial Angels, but on poor and despicable men; (even on such as are no better esteemed, then the *Refuse and Off-scouring of the World*): Some respect *God*, other some the *Angels*, and others have respect to *Us*, to whom they are sent; And lastly, there are other, which have respect to the *Work* where-about they are employed; Of each of these, somewhat.

First, *God hath respect herein to his own glory*; for the infirmity of the Instrument makes to the glory of the Agent: This reason the Apostle gives, *2 Cor. 4. 7. We have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, (or in Oyster-shells) (as the illfavoured Oyster is said to have a pearl in it) *that the excellency of the Power may be of God and not of Men*: We are apt to think; if an Angel from Heaven should bring the message to us, it would much make

1 Cor. 4.  
13.

2 Cor. 4. 7.  
by 2529X1-  
vois.



make for Gods glory; should a *Cherubin* or *Seraphim* preach the Gospel to us, we should readily and diligently obey, &c. but *God seeth not as men see*, He well knowes how apt we are to *Angel-worship*, and ascribe too much to the immediate instrument of our good, (as the Heathen did to those who had bin beneficial to them, and in that respect deified them,) but when God is pleased to hang great plummets on weak lines, and work strong effects by weak causes, the glory of the work redoundeth only unto him, to whom, of right it appertaineth: And this one thing hath confounded all *the wisdom of the World*, to see such mighty things effected, and brought to passe, by means so weak, vile and despised: 1 Cor. 1. 17. So *Sampsons* Victory was the more glorious, in that it was obtained with such an Instrument, as the *Jaw-bone of an Asse*, Judg. 15. 15, 16.

Acts 3. 12,  
& 14, 15,  
15.

1 Cor. 1.  
17.

Judg. 15.  
15, 16.

Secondly, In respect of the *Angels* themselves; For first, it suits not with their Nature to have such ordinary and visible converse with men, as is requisite for the Dresser of the Vineyard to have, who must alwayes be digging, and pruning, and dressing of the Vines and Figg-Trees therein growing; God (indeed) useth them for the good of his Church many times, and hath caused a visible appearance; but their part is not to be alwayes on the Stage, as the Dresser must be.

Heb. 1.  
ult.

Secondly, *They have another office designed* in the Vineyard, than this kind of dressing of it; They are appointed to Protect it, and to be *Reapers* at the end of the World, *Math. 13. 39.* but we read not that they are *Sowers*, to sow the seed: They direct, protect, and assist Gods Ministers in their Ministerial function, but we find not any where, that they did exercise the Publicke Ministry, that appertaineth to the Ministers of the Church: we read (indeed) that they have revealed from God to his Prophets, some part of his will, which those Prophets were to make known unto the Church (as *Zach. 2. 4.*) But that they themselves did publish these things unto the Church, we read not, for that appertained not to their Ministry, but to the Ministry of Man, 2 Cor. 5. 18. And what appertained to the office of the Ministers of the Church, they left for them to do, as appears in divers Instances, *Acts 8. 26, & 9. 10, 11, & 10. 9 & 10, 9.*

Math. 13.  
39.

Zach. 2. 4.  
2 Cor. 5.  
18.

Acts 8. 26,  
& 9. 10,  
11, & 10,  
9, & 16, 9.

Thirdly, God doth this *ex Gratiâ*, and hath respect to the good of man; in deputing Men and not Angels to this service; and that divers waies.

First, In regard of *man's weaknesse*; It suits best with our nature, to be dressed by Men, and not by Angels; he knows our infirmity, and whereof we are made; how timorous and full of fears we are, since our Fall, so that we cannot endure to behold those glorious Angels (whose nature is far superiour unto ours). Thus, when *Israel* had seen, and heard those majestical things, (but terrible to flesh and blood) which were shewed at the promulgation of the Law. (wherein the Ministry of Angels was used, *Act. 7. 53.*) they fled, and stood afar off, and said to *Moses*, *Speak thou to us and we will hear but let not God speak unto us any more, lest we dy* *Exod. 20. 19.* And it was generally thought of old, that if any did see an Angel, he should dy (as appears *Judg. 6. 22, 23. & 13. 22.*) It is certain that the best of men have trembled at the appearance of Angels as *Luk. 1. 12. Zachary*, a holy man, a Priest, and about his Priestly function, yet trembled. So *Luk. 2. 10. Mat. 28. 5.* In which respect, God is pleased to condescend to our frailty, and make choyce of such to dresse us, and husband us, as our selves are, who may say to us as *Elihu* did to *Job*, *Behold, I am according to thy wish, I also am cut out of the Clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee,* *Job 33. 6 7.*

Secondly, The ministry of man is a more likely way to do us good, and, in all probability, will be more effectual then the ministry of Angels, in sundry respects.

First, Being men like our selves, and subject to like passions and infirmities as we are, they cannot but sympathize with us, in our sorrows: where there is a symbolical Quality between Agent and Patient, there is the easiest transmutation, (saith Philosophy). If one see his own flesh weep, will not he weep likewise? If he sees his own flesh afflicted, will he not be compassionate towards it? When *Origen* wept, he set all the Congregation on weeping, and when some few in a Congregation mourn, it causeth the Minister to mourn with them. This *Sympathizing*, we find in *St. Paul*, *Act. 21. 13.* So *2 Cor. 11. 29.*

Who

*Act. 7. 53.*

*Exod. 20.*

*19.*

*Judg. 6. 22.*

*23. & 13.*

*22.*

*Luk. 1. 12.*

*Luk. 2. 10.*

*Mat. 28. 5.*

*Job. 33. 6.*

*7.*

*Jam. 5. 17.*

*Act. 21. 13.*

*1 Cor. 11.*

*29.*



*Who is weak and I am not weak?* Who is weak by *Passion*, and I not by *compassion*? *Who is offended and I burn not?* that is, am not exceedingly grieved on his behalf? Thus *Calvin* was affected towards the afflicted Churches of Christ, (though far remote) as if he had born them on his shoulders: Nothing can move compassion so much, as sympathizing and a fellow feeling of the same affliction. And this was one cause, why Christ became man; that he might *taste of our infirmities*, and in that respect have a compassionate disposition towards us in all our sufferings, *Heb. 4. 15.*

*Heb. 4. 15.*

Secondly, Being men like our selves, we can the more readily and without fear run to them for Instruction, and comfort. We may the more freely and familiarly, resort to them for advice in our doubtings; for comfort in Afflictions; Knowledge in Ignorance; Instruction in Godliness, and assistance in all wants and weaknesses &c. Familiar dealing is an excellent Art to win Affection. This Familiarity we cannot have with Angels, (as was shewed).

*Mal. 2. 7.*  
*2 King. 4.*

Thirdly, In that being men, as we are, they might be able to perfect their Doctrine by their Practice; that so all may know, their precepts are feasible, by seeing them done, (for who can think that that Physician can cure a disease in another, that is alwaies sick of the same); And that they indeed intended obedience, when they shall add a *Commentary of practice*, to the *Text of Preaching*. This way of Illustration of Doctrine, by Example prevails most with the Hearer, who is more apt to believe the Eye than the Ear; in which regard, *St. Paul* exhorted *Timothy* to be an *Example* to his flock, both in word and in *Conversation*, *1 Tim. 4. 12.*

*1 Tim. 4.*  
*12.*

Fourthly, Hereby the danger of deceit and delusion is prevented, which we should be open unto, if we should be taught and instructed by the appearance of Angels: For albeit the Truth in an Angel's mouth is *more weighty* in it self, yet it is not more certain to us; for *Sathan* can turn himself into an *Angel of Light*, he can transform himself into that shew; Nor is it an easy matter to give such infallible characters, whereby divine illuminations might be distinguished from diabolical illusions, that all ambiguity might be taken away. This deceit to

*2 Cor. 11.*  
*14.*  
*Dr. Stoughton.*

prevent.

1 Joh. 4. 1.

prevent, and for the better security of our souls, God is pleased to use the Ministry of men, and not of Angels, who, albeit they are subject to Error, yet far lesse dangerous then the former; in that we have a certain rule given us, whereby to try the Spirits, whether they be of God or no, 1 Joh. 4. 1. according to which, *if they speak not, there is no truth in them.* And thus you see how this way of furthering our good by the Ministry of Man, is more likely to be effectual than the Ministry of Angels.

Heb. 13.

18.

Gen. 22.

12.

*Nunc omnibus declarāti.*  
Chryf.

Gal. 4. 14.

Gal. 1. 8.

Thirdly, God hath respect to man herein, in that by this means he makes tryal of our obedience; Whether we will, for his sake, submit unto the rule and government of such as he hath set over us, being men like our selves (or perhaps inferiour), and yield obedience to him therein, whose Will they publish. Now I know (saith God to Abraham) *that thou fearest me; seeing, for my sake, thou hast not spared thine only Son,* Gen. 22. 12. God knew Abraham's fear before, but now he made experience of it, and so as to make both himself and others know that he feared God indeed: So may he say to us, if we receive his Ministers, as an *Angel of God*, (as the Galathians did Paul) not considering so much the meannesse of their Persons, as the truth of their Doctrine; which must be as carefully received, and as certainly held, as if an Angel from Heaven should deliver it (for should an Angel say, Thou shalt not forswear, Thou shalt not lye; it is no truer in the Angel's mouth than it is in the Minister's). Now I know that you fear my name, you have given an experiment of that which is in you; and made manifest, both to your selves and others, your mind and disposition to fear me and obey me, in a willing and chearful submission to my Ordinance. These are some reasons *in reference to men*, (amongst others that might be mentioned,) why God makes choyce of men rather then of Angels, for this service, to dresse his Vineyard.

Lastly, Other reasons may be drawn *from the work* whereabout they are employed, which is Man's Redemption, & eternal Salvation and Happinesse. Now, as our Redemption was to be wrought and performed onely in the Nature of Man, and not of Angels; so there is a decency and fit correspondance to that work



work, that our Redemption should be preached to us by Men and not by Angels; and that the gifts of Grace which tend to our happinesse, should be conveighed to us by the same Nature as by a Conduit-Pipe. And this reason the Apostle seemeth to use, 2 Cor. 5. 18. *All things are of God who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the Ministry of Reconciliation.* And thus you have some Reasons rendered, Why it pleased God to make choice of Men, and not of the glorious Angels of Heaven, to dresse and husband his Vineyard.

There is another Quærie, which would be answered before I come to the Application of the Poynt.

Whether, are the Ministers of the Gospel the onely Dressers of the Vineyard? Is the care of it put onely into their hands?

God's Vineyard is under the Protection and care of both Powers, both Civill and Ecclesiasticall; The Tower built in the midst of it Isa. 5. 2. was both for Moses and Aaron. By the power of the one, the Boar of the Wood is kept out; and by the care of the other, the Fox of the Field is discovered: Both are Fathers to the Church, to nourish and cherish it, Isa. 49. 23. 1 Thes. 2. 7, 8, 10. And both are the Ministers of God, to provide for the welfare of it, Rom. 13. 4. The same Name and Title is given to the Ministers of the Sword, as is elsewhere given to the Ministers of the Word, 1 Cor. 3. 5. 1 Tim. 4. 6. *Ego communis quidam sum Episcopus*, I am a certain common Bishop among you, said Constantine to God's Ministers in his time. Both Magistrates, and Ministers of God, are ordained for the Vineyard's good, yet both Magistracy and Ministry (*quætales*) are distinct: Both agree in their Institution, which is from God, and in the generall End, which is the good of God's Vineyard; yet both to the one, and to the other, God hath set bounds and limits, (as he hath done to the Sea,) which they may not passe. The Pastor's charge is onely about spiritual things; The Prince's and Magistrate's extendeth both to things spirituall and temporall: yet may not the Magistrate meddle with things merely spirituall, as the Preaching of the Word, Administration of the Sacraments, and exercise of Ecclesiasticall Discipline: They are to hear us, but not to step up into the Pulpit, to preach

unto

Act. 3. 22.

2 Cor. 5.  
18.

Quæst. 2.

Resp.  
Isa. 5. 2.

Isa. 49. 23.  
1 Thes. 2. 7,  
8, 10.  
Rom. 13. 4.  
Διδόνον  
1 Cor. 3. 5.  
1 Tim. 4. 6.  
Euseb. de  
vit. Const.

Job 26.

unto us; they are to receive the Sacrament from our hands, but not to give it, nor consecrate it, with their own hands: These things the Magistrate, by his Authority, ought to command to be done, but he hath no Calling, nor warrant to do these things: Nor may the *Minister of the Word* ascend the Tribunal, to judge *Civill* or *Criminall* Causes; yet ought he to teach and exhort Magistrates, that *Justice be done without respect of Persons*. They are continually to help the one, the other; but neither to inroach nor invade upon the others work. Nor can God's Vineyard be well dressed without the help of both: And the like care belongs to inferiour Officers in their places, they being subordinate to the higher.

And as Magistrates, and publique Persons, are Dressers of the Vineyard, so is every *Private Christian* (within the compasse of his Calling). Who is it that hath not *some Vineyard* or other to tend? When thou art converted thy self, strengthen thy Brethren said Christ to *Peter*, *Luk. 22. 32*. The like charge is given to others as well as to him. *As every man hath received a gift, so must he minister*: None of us hath received Grace for himself solely, but for the good of others likewise, *1 Cor. 12. 7*. Hence are those exhortations so frequent in Scripture, *Exhort one another; Admonish one another; Comfort one another, Edify one another*: And who but a *Cain* will say, *Am I my Brother's Keeper*? More especially, those that are Governours of Families stand charged with this Duty, *Prov. 27. 23*. You that are Parents, Masters, &c. stand as strictly charged with the Souls of those under your roofs, as the Minister doth with the Souls of his Congregation; yea, every one hath a Figg-Tree of his own to tend. *Mine own Vine have I not kept* (saith the Spouse in the *Canticles*, cap. 1. 6.) *Sermo non est de Vineâ, sed de Anima*; every man hath a Vine within him to dresse and tend; a Soul of his own, out of which there are many Stones of offence to be cast; many luxuriant Branches to be pruned and lopped off: *Præ omni Custodiâ* (as *Hierom* reads), *Above all Keepings, Keep thy heart with all diligence*, *Prov. 4. 23*. *Keep, Keep, Watch, Watch, &c.*

Notwithstanding, all that hath been said, (both of Publique, and Private Persons,) the Ministers of God's holy word, and Sacraments,

Luk. 12.  
14.

Deut. 1.

*every one  
from the high  
to the low  
his own vine  
yard to dresse*

Luk. 22.  
33.

1 Pet. 4. 10.

1 Cor. 12.

7.

Gal. 6. 1.

Col. 3. 16.

1 Thes. 5.

11. 14.

Heb. 3. 13.

Gen. 4. 9.

Pro. 27. 23.

Cant. 1. 6.

Bern. in

loc.

Pro. 4. 23.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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Sacraments, are the Dressers of the Vineyard, κατ' ἐξοχὴν, in a more eminent manner, being next, and more immediately knit to the custody and care of it: They (and onely they) being called, and put into commission, to preach the Gospel, and administer the Sacraments, and into whose hands the Keys of it are put in trust. In which sense, we may truly say, *Quid Imperatorium Ecclesiæ?* What have Kings and Princes (much lesse others) to do with these things? *Uzzah* not being content to sway the royal Scepter, would needs lay hold on the Censer, and presuming to burn Incense to the Lord, provoked thereby the wrath of the Lord against him; and taking upon him to cleanse the People, he himself was smitten with an unclean and fowl disease to the day of his death, *2 Chron. 26. 20.* Thus having given you an Answer to these Quæries, (which serves for the clearing of the Poynt) we come now to apply it.

From hence, we may be first informed, both of the Office of God's Ministers, the Dressers, and the Honour due unto them in that respect.

The Dresser's work is such as he need not be ashamed of: For however, the Calling of a Dresser of a Vineyard or Garden, may be esteemed but mean and base, in some mens eyes, yet it is a Calling that *Adam* in *Paradise* was employed in, even in the state of Innocency, *Gen. 2. 15.* and in the eyes of God, and of his Saints, this Calling of the Minister is honourable, *Luke 1. 15.* Nor is there any reason, why it should be despicable in the eyes of any. It is the *worthiest Subject* in the World, that they deal about, even the Salvation of the Soul. They are sent to preach the Word; to teach people the way to Heaven; to pray for the People in the Congregation; and to carry their prayers to God; to celebrate the Sacraments, to the comfort of their people; all for the Salvation and good of their Souls. The Art of a Gold-Smith we count more worthy then the Art of a Black-Smith; and the reason is, for that the matter whereupon he works as his Subject (which is Gold), is more excellent and perfect than Iron, on which the other worketh: In this respect it should be preferred to other Callings, (were there no other). But besides, they labour for God; tend his Figg-Tree; dresse his Vineyard; yea, and more, they are Θεοῦ ἰσχυροὶ Co-

Mat. 28.

19.

Mat. 16.

19.

Joh. 20. 23.

Hofius ad  
Const.

2 Chro. 26.  
20.

Use. I.

Gen. 2. 15.

Luk. 1. 15.

1 Cor. 3. 2.

Heb. 5. 1.

1 Tim. 3. 1.

workers with God in this service, as the Apostle telleth us, 1 Cor. 3. 9. They are sent from God, to bring men to God; and keep them with God; and make them active for God; that in the end they may be eternally saved, and blessed by God: And if this be not a worthy Work, as the Apostle termeth it; judge you?

For the better accomplishing and perfecting whereof, there are three principal Virtues, (as implements) which are necessarily requisite in these Dressers of the Lord's Vineyard.

First, *Skilfulnesse* and *Ability* to do this work that he is called unto; This is required, 2 Tim. 2. 2. & 1 Tim. 3. 2. He must be *didaskalos*, one apt to teach; able to divide the Word of God aright, that all may be edified, 2 Tim. 2. 25; and (like a wise Steward) know how to give God's household their portion of meat in due season, Luk. 12. 42. Such as refuse knowledge, God hath threatened to refuse, so that they shall be *no Priests to him*. Hos. 4. 4. So Levit. 21. 17. That blindness of the body figured the blindness of the mind. Under this head are many Members comprehended; as Sufficiency in himself, having some competent knowledge in the Tongues and Arts; Secondly, an Ability to expresse that Sufficiency; the *Door of Utterance* is necessary: Such a measure of Knowledge must be had, as that he may be able to defend what he hath taught; *exhort, comfort, confute* Tit. 1. 9. which cannot be without Knowledge.

Secondly, *Faithfulnesse* and *Sincerity*; *He that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully*, (saith God, Jer. 23. 28.) This is required in a Steward, *That he be found faithful*, 1 Cor. 4. 2. Such are to be made choyce of, for the work of the Ministry, 2 Tim. 2. 2. This is of a large extent; It respects both *Doctrine* and *Life*; Fidelity in our Dispensation; Sincerity of Conversation, 2 Tim. 3. 10. *Thou hast known my Doctrine and Manner of living*; These two are conjoynd, and may not, in any faithful Minister, be separated. In *Poynt of Doctrine*, they must be found faithful for *Matter*, in making known the whole counsell of God unto those to whom they are sent, so far as they are acquainted with it, and the People capable to apprehend it, Aet. 20. 20. 27. 1 Cor. 11. 23. Mark 4. 33. Joh. 16. 12. And for *Manner*, they must so speak, as becommeth the Oracles of

2 Tim. 2. 2.

1 Tim. 3. 2.

2 Tim. 2.

25.

Luk. 12.

42.

Hos. 4. 4.

Levit. 21.

17.

Eph. 6. 19.

Col. 4. 3.

Tit. 1. 9.

Jer. 23. 28.

1 Cor. 4. 2.

2 Tim. 2. 2.

2 Tim. 3.

10.

Aet. 20. 20,

27.

1 Cor. 11.

23.

Mark. 4.

33.

Joh. 16.

12.



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of God, 1 Pet. 4. 11. in plainnesse and power, 1 Cor. 2. 4. giving to every one their portion as need shall require, Luke 12. 42. 1 Cor. 3. 2. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Adorning their Doctrine with a holy life and conversation 1 Tim. 2. 7, 8 Such a faithful Pastor and Desser was Paul. Phil. 4. 9. And such ought all other to be, that are called to this service, 1 Tim. 4. 12.

Thirdly, *Care and Vigilancy*; Be diligent to know the State of thy Flocks, and look well to thy Herds, saith Solomon, Prov. 27. 23. which Beda particularly applies to the Pastor of the Church, shewing it to be their duty to know the dispositions and actions of every one particularly that is under them, (if it may be). *My Vineyard is before me*, that is, The Vineyard committed to my care and keeping, I am continually mindful of to manure and dresse. The Prophets of God were to stand upon their Watch-Tower to hearken, and to hear what the People did: The like care ought the Ministers of the Gospel to have; Therefore they are Styled *Watchmen*, Heb. 13. 17. and *Over-seers* of their Congregations, Acts 20. 28. They are to have an eye over the life and manners of their People, as the Desser hath on every Vine and Figg-Tree in the Vineyard: without this spiritual acquaintance with the State and Condition of our People, we shall never be able to apply our selves unto them as we ought; We may preach twice every Sabbath, and it may be solidly and accurately, and yet not do that good either in converting souls, or building up in godlinesse, as we might, and should do, if we had more frequent and familiar converse with our People; for then we should be better able to speak unto their hearts, (as Abraham's Servant did unto the heart of the Mayd,) and apply our selves unto their Particular estates. And thus I have acquainted you (in general) with the work of the Minister, the Desser; In the faithful discharge whereof they are worthy to be respected by their People, and to have that which is required by the Apostle, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders that Rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine.*

This double honour due to the Desser of Gods Vineyard is, generally to be understood, & *Reverentie & Subsidii*, of Reverence and Recompence; of Countenance and of Maintenance.

Y 2

You

1 Pet. 4. 11.  
1 Cor. 2. 4.  
2 Cor. 4. 2.  
Luke 12. 42.  
1 Cor. 3. 2.  
1 Tim. 4. 2.  
Tit. 2. 7, 8.  
Phil. 4. 9.  
1 Tim. 4. 12.  
Prov. 27. 23.  
Bed. in. loc.  
Cant. 4. 12.  
Isa. 21. 5, 6, & 62. 6.  
Jer. 6. 17.  
17.  
Heb. 13. 17.  
Act. 20. 28.

† †

1 Tim. 5. 27.  
Chrys.  
Amb.  
Haimo.  
Aquino.  
Calvin.

Phil. 2. 29. You Reverence them, First, when you have *them* and their calling in high account and estimation, as, *Phil. 2. 29. Receive him in the Lord with all gladnesse* (saith *Paul* of *Epaphroditus*) and hold such in reputation; This is that knowing of them which the *Apostle* speaks of, *1 Thes. 5. 12. We beseech you Brethren to know them which labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you:* That knowledge there spoken of, is not a bare knowledge, and simple notice taken of their Persons; but a knowledge of *Approbation* of their calling, accompanied with an acknowledgement of the inestimable benefit which we receive by it, *1 Cor. 4. 1.*

*1 Thes. 5. 13. ὑπερ ἐκτε-  
ραως.* Secondly, When in your affections you have them in singular love for their work's sake, *1 Thes. 5. 13. esteem them very highly in love* (saith the *Apostle*) or more then exceedingly (for so the Greek hath it) with an overflowing measure, after a sort excessive; one would have thought, that, that one word *τεταως*, abundantly, had bin enough; but *St. Paul* abounds above that, and puts an *ἐν* to it, and then an *ὑπερ*, he could go no higher. The *Apostle* exceeds in his expression, so should People in their Affection towards their Minister: Such an excess of love did the *Galatians* for a while bear towards *Paul*, that if it had bin possible, they would have pulled out their own eyes, and have given them unto him, *Gal. 4. 15.*

*Joh. 10. 4. Explained.* Thirdly, By People's Obedience they are to manifest their reverence which they have of them, *Joh. 10. 4. Good sheep know their Shepherds voyce, and follow him:* Such was the manner in the East-Countries, the Shepherd drave not the Sheep before him, but they followed Him; the meaning is, they go in and out according to His saying: So, *Heb. 13. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves,* that is, give over your selves to be Ruled and Directed by them according to the Word. No greater proof of a Reverential respect to the Dressers of God's Vineyards, than this: *2 Cor. 2. 9. Philem. 21.*

*Gal. 6. 6. ἐν τῷ διδάσκειν αὐτοῖς.* To this honour of Reverence, must be added the honour of Maintenance; They are to be maintained both in Ability of Purse, and Dignity of Person: *Gal. 6. 6. Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that hath taught in all good things;*



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things; A large allowance (you will say); and such should their allowance be (for the Ministry of the Gospel is as worthy of it as the Ministry of the Law, as hereafter you shall hear): They are the *Ambassadors* of Christ, and their maintenance should besetm the honour and dignity of that Person, whom they represent; and of that Service, wherein they minister. And thus you have heard (in short) the sum of what may be expected, both from *Minister* and *People*: Now let us with as much Patience hear of the sayings both of the one and other.

Questionlesse, There is matter enough administred, for a just Reproof: it were happy if our sayings were as easily cured, as they may be discovered.

There are four sorts of Dressers in the Vineyard of the Lord; Some *have a will* to dresse it, but *want skill* to do it, some have *skill to do it*, but have *no will unto it*; some *want both*; They have *neither will nor skill*, yet they would be esteemed the Dressers of it: And there are some that *have both skill and will*, these onely make good their Calling.

The former sort are they who like well the Work, and affect the Calling, but they want the gift of Knowledge, Utterance, &c. and yet (with *Abimaaz*) they will be running (albeit they have no tydings to carry) and needs must undertake the calling of the Ministry; As if good *Affections* and *Inclinations* were a sufficient *Qualification* of them for so weighty a service. Were nothing else required then to be willing, Taylors, Tinkers, Tappers, &c. might take upon them to dresse the Vineyard of the Lord; But these were *not those gifts*, which when Christ *ascended up on high*, He sent from thence for *the building up of the Church, and edifying of his Body*. To such Christ will one day say, as the King in the Gospel to him that wanted a wedding Garment, *Friend, how camest thou in hither?* Who made you a Dresser in my Vineyard, and know no better to handle your spade, and use the pruning hook? Who made you a divider of the Word, that thus mangle it, and cut it out into Gobbetts? Who made you a Builder in my House, that know not how to square a Stone, or hew a peice of Timber for the Building? I will say no more of these, onely put you in mind of an Ordinary experiment: After the *Oxe* that lyeth on the grasse, and oppresseth

2 Cor. 5.  
20.

See how  
several sorts  
of dressers of  
the vineyard  
use 2.  
of the Lord

2 Sam. 18.  
20.

Eph. 4.8.

Math. 22.  
12.

oppresseth it; and after the *Horse* that feedeth on the grasse, and devourerh it; A *Sheep* will feed. But after the *Goose* that flancheth the gaffe, it hath no stomach to graze: little nourishment can Gods *Sheep* receive from him, that puts a scorn upon his function, by his Ignorance.

The second sort are such, as have both outward and inward abilities, yet have no heart unto the service which they have undertaken. A *Talent* (and that a large one too) they have received, but they wrap it up in an ilde brain without practise, as *Goliath's sword* was in a Gloath, without its use: the Fountain of their knowledge is sealed up, as was *Laban's well*, with a stone of *Security* or *Saturity*. The *Raven* before she hath got a prey cries on every Sceptle; she hath no sooner got it, but she lyeth under a sunny-bank, beaking her self. And of the *Stork* it is storied, that whilst she is young, she hath a sweet voyce; but when she waxerh somewhat in years, she becomes hoarse. Indeed the *aged Levite* (whose age had disabled his strength,) was dispenced with, and dismissed from cleaving the Sacrifices, yet he was commanded to Minister to his Brethren; that is, by teaching what they should do in the service of the *Tabernacle*: So, though Age, may somewhat weaken the Dressers natural faculties, that neither his understanding is so apprehensive, nor his memory so retentive as formerly; and in that respect somewhat excuse them from their former diligence, yet this gives them no toleration to be wholly negligent. The faithful Witnesses mentioned, *Revel. 11. 7.* finished their lives and testimonies together. But as for those, who in the midst of their strength, start aside like a *broken bow*, and having wings (like the *Ostrich*) yet flye not with them; Or having gotten Wealth and Preferment with the *Herculian Idol*, silence themselves; such must look to be called to a reckoning for it: And albeit God say not to them, as he did to that *unprofitable Servant*, *ex ore tuo, out of thy own mouth*, (for they say nothing); yet *ex silentio tuo, by thy silence*, yea, *for thy silence*, I will Judge thee.

A third sort of the Dressers, there may be found in the Vineyard of the Lord; who have neither will nor skill to discharge their function, and with these the Church of *Rome* doth most abound.

One,

Num. 8.  
26.

Rev. 11. 7.

Psal. 78.  
57.

Luk. 19.  
22.



One, (and he no mean one) amongst them, tell us that he cannot but smile at the folly of us, of the Reformation; who preach and yet have no calling to it. We might retort it upon better ground (saith one of our men) (if it were a thing to be smiled at) that they who have a calling to preach, (as they say they have,) yet neither can nor will: It was said of old that it was as rare a thing to hear a Bishop Preach, as to see an Ass to fly; and we read how innumerable Parish Priests amongst them, came to their Benefices; not from the Schools, but from the Plough, and servile occupations, which could neither read nor understand Latine, nor know B from a Bartledore: and that some of their Bishops had neither read, nor heard, nor learned the Sacred Scriptures; nor so much as touched the Bible, and very likely so; for the Bishop of *Dunkelden* replying to a Minister (who said that he had read the Old and New Testament) I thank God, I never knew what the Old and New Testament was, said the Bishop. But why look I so far from home? It is to be feared, that there are amongst us such as the Prophet *Zachary* speaks of, *Cap. 13. 4. 5.* who are no Prophets but *Husbandmen* and *Heardsmen* from their youth up; such as are more fit to go to Plough, and dresse Horses heels, then dresse the Vineyard of the Lord: happy were it if Gods Church were purged of such Dressers; and happy for themselves if they would cast off their *rough garment*, and no longer deceive Gods people with their fancies.

There are a fourth sort of Dressers, who have both *ability* and *will* to do their Masters Work, and dresse his Vines and Figg-Trees: who are Workmen indeed, such as *need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*, and with such as these, this *English Vineyard* is as richly stored, as any Vineyard in the Christian World (blessed be Gods name): albeit they have as little respect and honour given them, as any Ministers in the Christian World. *Ministriis eorum nihil vilium* (said *Campian*). Indeed what Nation under Heaven do lesse regard their Dressers, then our English Nation? The *Turks*, *Moors*, and *Arabians* have their Priests in highest estimation; the *Syrians* adorn their Priests with a Crown of Gold: The *Brackmans*, with a Scepter of Gold, and Mitre beset with precious Stones: The

*Romans*

*Clemang. de  
corrupt. stat.  
Eccl.*

*Joh. Fox in  
Hist. Scot.  
inter annos.  
1540. &  
1543.*

*Zach. 13.  
4. 5.*

*Joh. Eo-  
hem. de  
moribus  
omnium  
Gent.  
Diod. Sicul.  
l. 2. Bodiu.  
de Repub. l.  
3. c. 8.*

*Romans* Styled their *Flamen*, *Regem Sacrorum*; and who knows no, in what honour the *Papists* have their *Mass-Priests* at this day? Much might be said to this purpose, (but all to no purpose); yet amongst *Protestants*, (and especially amongst us *English*) Ministers and Preachers are of least regard (unlesse it be it amongst some few that receive comfort by their Ministry.) Some indeed give them the *honour of countenance*, but withhold the *honour of maintenance*; Some give them the *honour of maintenance*, but withhold from them the *honour of countenance*; some withhold both, and afford neither the *honour of countenance nor maintenance*; but the number of those is very single that give them that *double-honour*, both of *countenance and maintenance* that the word requires (as one well observes).

Dyke Com-  
ment on  
Phil. p.  
316.

There are those, who seem to love and reverence their Ministers, but they must be spared in *matter of maintenance*; They will commend them for their labours, countenance them with their presence, speak well of them, courteously salute them, and give them the good time of the day; and this they conceive to be a sufficient recompence for all their paines: *Zenocrates* said once to the Children of One, who had bin liberal unto him, I have required your Father abundantly, in that all men speak well of him for his kindnesse shewed to me. So these men think it a recompence sufficient; in that they cause others (by their Commendations) to speak well of their Minister. Could the Ministers of the Gospel add *Miracles* to the Preaching of the Word, these men would mightily extol them; (for it is no lesse then a miracle for a Lamp to burn without Oyl, for a Minister to labour, and live by his labour, and yet have not wherewith to sustain him in his labours). But such as these may be resembled to those Hypocrites which St. *James* speaks of, *Cap. 2. 16.* They say unto their needy Brother depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding they give not those things which are needful to the Body. Such mouth-mercy and airie courtesie is good Cheape, and many a faithful Dresser in God's Vineyard meets with it: (especially where the Ministers maintenance ariseth from people's benovolence). Some kind of forwardnesse they may find in people for a time, but it soon growes cold; and the best benovolence which they can get, is,  
good

Jam. 2. 16.



good words for all their pains, (which notwithstanding is expected at the Dresser's hands as much as ever) and therein they are usefull like pack-horses, which have heavy burthens layd upon their backs; and bells hung at their ears to make them musick, that they may chearfully undergo their load.

Others there are that give them the *honour of maintenance*, but then they with-hold the *honour of countenance*: This is ordinarily found where Gods Servants the Ministers have a competent maintenance made certain to them by Tything; which kind of maintenance, the Lord ratified under the Law by plain Precepts: And albeit the Gospel doth not, *interminis*, assigne them to his Ministers now, as he did to the *Levites* under the Law; yet the Apostle tells us that *the Lord hath ordained*, and taken order for the maintenance of the Ministers of the Gospel, **1 Cor. 9. 14.** implying a Statute for the same. Now let any shew what certain maintenance did ever the Lord appoint for the Ministry but Tythes. Certain it is, that the custome of Tything hath bin practised in the Church many hundreds of years, and hath the Authority of Councils and the Command of Princes to back it; nor to this day can any better way be devised or found out for the maintenance of the Ministry than that: and yet how grudgingly are they paid, how fraudulently many times detained and purloyned, (albeit by the Law of the Land, the Minister hath as much right to them, as any Man hath to that he doth possesse); as hereafter you shall hear more fully. Let the Minister demand his own, then the countenance is cast down upon him, as *Cain's* was towards his Brother *Abel*: Men lowre, and look upon him like a Dogg (as we use to speak) under the door, and let him beware his shins; either they will not hear him any more, or but seldome, and then to watch his halting; If their sins be met withall, they will revile, and rayle, traduce, and slander: O! he speaks against the State, against Government, &c. Now he shall be charged with sedition, covetousnesse, unprofitablenesse, and what not? And if he sit not sure in his saddle, he must look to be layd upon the ground before he be aware. This woful experience hath taught us to be true: He must be more then an ordinary honest man, that will pay his Tythes honestly and chearfully.

Levit. 27.  
30.  
Numb. 18.  
21.  
1 Cor. 9.  
14.

Gen. 4. 6.

Jer. 20. 10.

The e is a Third sort amongst us, that will neither allow the Dresser of the Vineyard *Countenance* nor *Maintenance*; such as are possessed with an Anabaptistical Spirit, crept into many Places and Parishes in this Kingdom, who deny any need of the Office of a Dresser, and publique Teacher, and that any other maintenance is due from People to their Minister, then what is freely given to them as an Alms by way of courtesie and gratuity.

All Christians (they say) are Priests to God, and it is no better then a gullery of the People, to perswade that one is more a Dresser of the Vineyard then another man.

But that there is such a Calling as the Ministry (distinct from other Callings) is evident enough from Scripture to sober spirits; God gave *some to be Apostles, some Prophets, some Pastors, some Teachers*; for the building up of the Church of Christ, Eph. 4. 8, 11. *Are all Apostles, are all Pastors, are all Teachers?*

1 Cor. 12, 28, 29. which Interrogation is a flat Negation, They are not all so: All the Body is not an Eye; no more in the Body-Mystical is all a Minister. And doth not the Scripture expressly distinguish betwixt those that are *taught in the word*, and those that *teach them*? Gal. 6. 6, betwixt those that *feed the flock*, and those that are *fed by them*? 1 Pet. 5. 12. If no peculiar Church be committed to them more then to others, or more then what belongs to all Professors; whence is it that there are so many Rules given to Believers, how to carry themselves towards them, as to know them, 1 Thes. 5. 12. to obey them? And why are they enjoined to watch over the souls of others, as those who must (in a special manner) be accountable to God for them, Heb. 13. 17. And whether it were the Institution of Christ, or the Invention of Man, that at Ephesus and Miletus there should be Elders, who should *take heed not onely to themselves, but to all the flock, whereof* (not onely men, but) the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers, and to *feed the Church of God which he had purchased with his own blood*, Acts 20. 17. let any understanding Christian Judge.

It is true, every Christian is (after a sort) the Dresser of a Vineyard (as hath bin said); he is a *Spiritual Priest* to God, and is to employ his gifts for the good of others, 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11.

But

Eph. 4. 8,  
11.

1 Cor. 12.  
28, 29.

Gal. 6. 6.  
1 Pet. 5. 1,  
2.

1 Thes. 5.  
12.

Heb. 13.  
17.

Act. 20. 17.

1 Pet. 4.  
10, 11.



But where it is required, that they should do this Publicly, and Ministerially? Are not Christians called *Kings* as well as *Priests*? *Revel. 1. 6. & 3. 10.* And yet I suppose no man will be so audaciously foolish, as to step into the Throne, and offer to Rule the Nation in that respect. And is it safe for any (except those who are thereunto called by God) to enter upon the Priest's Office, because they are styled Priests in Scripture? But I may spare my breath in speaking of these.

*Revel. 1.  
6, & 3, 10.*

There is a fourth and last sort, that indeed give to their Ministers this double honour both of *Reverence* and *Recompence*, and that for *their work's sake*; and these onely are they, who entertain aright the Servants of the Lord, and may expect a blessing. It is possible for a man to give his Minister both honour of *Countenance* and *Maintenance*, for by-respects as for Birth, Education, Learning, Urbanity, Peaceableness, good usage in payments, &c. But unlesse the work of the Ministry be that which drawes affection, that thou canst say; I reverence and honour this Minister that God hath set over me, for that he teacheth me to know God, to fear God, &c. He informs me of my duty, reproves me for my saylings; therefore I reverence him; thou honourst him not as thou shouldst. And to be thus honoured, and preferred in the hearts of our People, for our Work and Labour, is the highest preferment on Earth that we should seek after. But I shall proceed no farther at this time, on this unrelishing Use.

*Dresser.]*

*Text*

We have done with the *Name*, but not with the *Number*; why Dresser, seeing there are many of them? *propter unitatem* (saith the Gloss), All being of *one heart* and *mind* (as were those Believers mentioned, *Acts 2. & 5, 32*). Thence we inferre;

*The Dressers of Gods Vineyard should be as one in their Master's Work,*

*Doct.*

One (I say), not in respect of Power and Jurisdiction: for in that sense, a parity in the Ministry is very dangerous, the Mother of Sects and Schisms, which to prevent (saith *Calvin*), the Elders, that were the Ministers of the Word, did chuse but one of every City, from amongst themselves, unto whom they gave the

*Calv. Instit.  
lib. 4. c. 4.  
Se. 2. &  
4.*

Mat. 20.  
25.

Hier. ad E-  
vag.

Mat. 28. 19.  
Joh. 10.  
19, 20, 22.

1 Cor. 3. 9.

2 Cor. 1. 1.  
Phil. 1. 1.  
Colos. 1. 1.  
1 Thes. 1. 1.

Phil. 2. 25.  
Col. 1. 7. &  
4. 7.

the Title of *Bishop*, *Ne ex aequalitate, ut fieri solet, dissidia nascentur*, Lest, by equality, as usually it happens, dissensions should arise: And in that very Text, brought by those who are otherwise minded, *Mat. 20. 25.* we find a *Maximus* and *Minimus* amongst Christ's Disciples, He that is *greatest* amongst you, let him be as the *least*, and he that is *chiefest* as him that ministrerh; so the greatest became as the least, to serve and minister to the rest, and therein, *One in the work of the Ministry*: All have *Idem Ministerium*, (saith our Reverend Jewell) albeit *diversam potestatem*; Christ granted to none of his Disciples any Primacy, or Superiority, in that respect. *Episcopatus non suscipit magis & minus* (saith Hierom): One Bishop may be richer than another, or more learned than another, but he cannot be more a Bishop than another Bishop is. When Christ gave unto his Disciples their Commission, he gave it equally and generally to them all, *Math. 28. 19. Go and teach all Nations*; So *Joh. 20. 19, 20, 22.* Christ stood in the midst of his Disciples, and breathed on them all saying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose ever sins ye remit they are remitted, &c.* He leaned not to Peter, nor to James, nor to John; nor to any one of the rest did he give the Authority of binding and loosing, particularly; but he stood in the midst of them all, and gave the same power to them all.

This the great Apostle of the Gentiles confesseth, *1 Cor. 3. 9. We together are God's Labourers*, (one of us as well as another), we work together with and for the Lord. St. Paul was a wise Master-Builder, and had a higher degree of Ministry than others, (for he was an *Apostle*, and so a degree above an *Evangelist*); yet he did account of the Evangelists as of his fellows, and equals, in the work of the Ministry, and joyns them with him as his *Assistants*, as we read in sundry of his Epistles, *2 Cor. 1. 1. Phil. 1. 1. Colos. 1. 1. 1 Thes. 1. 1.* Nor did he onely esteem thus of those who were Evangelists, but he esteemed of Pastors (a degree lower then the other) as his fellow-Labourers: So he calls *Epaphroditus*, his companion in Labour, and fellow-Souldier, *Phil. 2. 25.* So others, *Epaphras*, *Tychicus* *Clement* &c. he terms his fellow-Servants, and fellow-Labourers, *Colos. 1. 7. & 4. 7.* acknowledging those who were his Inferiours in degree, to be the same that he was in the Ministerial Function.

For



For the further clearing and confirming of the Poynt, let me shew you, first, wherein they are to shew themselves *One* in their Ministerial Function: Secondly, The *Grounds* and *Reasons* of it, why they should be as one in their Master's Service: Of the first.

Ministers should manifest their *Unity* and *Onewesse*, three wayes especially; First, in *Doctrine*, they are to teach the same Truth, and be of the *same mind* and *judgment*, at least in all fundamental and necessary Poynts, *Gal. 1. 8, 9. If any other preach any other Gospel then that which you have received, let him be accursed* (saith the Apostle); and lest he might be thought to go too far in so saying, he reiterates it, *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach another Gospel unto you than that which you have received, let him be accursed*. By another Gospel, he meaneth any Doctrine, divers from the Fundamentals which they had laid; as is plain, in that, coming to explicate the Gospel to which the *Galathians* were turned, he pitcheth onely upon that one poynt of Justification by works, or the necessity of keeping the ceremonial Law in all Believers: Such a care had the Apostles that there might be a consent in their teaching, as that they drew the maine Articles of the Gospel into a Compend, called the *Symbol of the Apostles*, by which all Doctrines should be regulated; or if not they, yet certainly it was done by Apostolical men in the most pure and ancient times of the Church. And in respect of this consent, God's Servants are said to have *one mouth*, *Luk. 1. 70. as he spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets*, not *mouths*; And *one Voice*, *Isa. 52. 8. Thy Watchmen shall lift up the Voice, with the Voice together shall they sing*: which though literally; the words are to be applyed to *Israel's* delivery out of captivity, which the Prophets should publish with great freedom and consent of Spirit; yet (saith *Calvin*) they have respect to the times of the Gospel also, shewing the great union that shall be betwixt God's faithful Ministers in the work of Christ, unto his second coming.

Secondly, As they are to be one in Judgment, so in *Affection* they are to be as one. *Paul* never spake of any faithful Minister without signification of special love and brotherly Affection: He terms *Tychicus* not onely Brother, but *dear Brother*

*Gal. 1. 8, 9.*  
*Exp'ained.*

*Luk. 1. 70.*  
*Isa. 52. 8*

*Calv. in*  
*loc.*

*Eph. 6. 21.*

*Eph.*

Colof. 1.7.  
2 Tim. 1.2.  
2 Pet. 3.15.

Gal. 2.11.  
Mar. 4.18,  
21.

Eph. 6. 21. and *Epaphroditus* he styles, not onely Fellow-servant, but his dear *Fellow servant*, Colof. 1. 7. and *Timothy* not onely his Son, but his *dearly beloved Son*, 2 Tim. 1. 2. And *Peter* (speaking of *Paul*, styles him his *beloved Brother*, 2 Pet. 3. 15. (albeit there had been difference betwixt them, and he had been sharply reprov'd before by St. *Paul*, for his dissembling, Gal. 2. 11.) And it is (not altogether impertinently) taken notice of, that our Saviour called to the Apostle-ship three paire of Brethren, (at the least) intimating therein what brotherly Love and Affection should be amongst the Ministers of the Gospel. The general calling of a Christian should be a sufficient bond to knit together the hearts of all true Christians in Love, but when to this Bond a second is added, that of Vocation and Calling, this should knit our hearts more fast and firmly each to ther.

Judg 1. 13.

Isa. 11. 13,  
14.  
Mar. 6. 7.

Ecc1. 4. 10,  
12.

2 Cor. 8.  
12.  
Zeph. 3. 9.

Thirdly, We should be *one in the helping and assisting of each other*; we should say, as *Judah* said unto *Simeon* his Brother, *Come up with me into my Lot that we may fight against the Canaanites, and I likewise will go with thee into thy Lot*, Judg. 1. 13. So it was prophesied as a fruit of the Gospel, that *Ephraim* and *Judah* should cease to vex one another, and that they should both joyn together against the common adversary, Isa. 11. 13, 14. This was one reason why our Saviour, when he sent out the twelve, sent them out *two by two*, Mark 6. 7. that one might be aiding and assisting to the other in their doings. Brother that holdeth with Brother *is like a fortified City*, saith the Proverb. And hence it is that Ministers are termed *Fellow helpers*; So St. *Paul* styled *Titus*, 2 Cor. 8. 22. And this is that serving of our Master with *one shoulder*, as the Prophet phraseth it, Zeph. 3. 9. (And so the Original hath it.) And thus you hear wherein God's Servants, the Dressers of his Vineyard, are to be as One. Now let us hear what ground there is for this Unity.

Eph. 4. 4.  
&c.

Mar. 23. 8,  
9.

That Text (formerly mentioned, and made use of to perswade to Unity), Ephes. 4. 4. doth in a more special manner concern Ministers, than any other, and layeth a stronger bond on them than it doth on any private Christian.

First, There is *Unus Dominus*, one Lord; *one is our Doctor and Master, and that is Christ*, Math. 23. 8, 9. All of us are  
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Schollars unto him, and of the same form, and have the same Lesson read unto us, and it is a shame for us if we should not be as One in his Service.

Secondly, *Una fides*, It is *one Faith* that we preach and teach; Nothing is more ordinary with St. Paul, in his Epistles, then to cry out upon divers and different Teachers, as the greatest bane of the Church.

Thirdly, *Unum Baptismum*, *One Baptism*, that we administer; nor are any baptized into our names, 1 Cor. 1. 13. but into the name of *one God*, and admitted into his Family.

Fourthly, *Unum Corpus*; The *Bride* that we are to trim and dresse is but one, our pains and care must be altogether about her, that she may be presented glorious.

Fifthly, *Unus Spiritus*, the *Spirit is but one* by which we are ryed together, and from whom we have received our gifts and abilities, (albeit there be diversity of them,) 1 Cor. 12. 4. and this *Spirit moves* the wheels together, so that they go one way, and this one Spirit calls us.

Sixthly, *In uni spe*, in one *common hope* of life and happiness: It is one Heaven we hope for; one mark, the prize of our *high Calling*; we all contend for; one port that we steer our course unto; By this *one hope* there comes more strength to this Union, Job. 4. 36, 37. Now then, since there is one Lord, (so we are one in the head;) One Faith, (so one in the heart;) One Baptism, (so one in the face;) One Body, (so one in the hand;) Is there not great reason that Head, Heart, Face, Hand, all, should look one way, and make after the same place, which is Heaven, our common Hope?

It is a Doctrine both of General and Particular Concernment.

In general, It concerns both Minister and People; We have all great cause to lament bitterly, for the divisions that are amongst the Dressers of our Vines and Figg-Trees: It was sometimes said of Ephraim, *Divisum est cor eorum*, *their heart is divided*, Hos. 10. 2. So may it be said of these in these our daies, and this is no small Judgment upon this Nation. Shepherds observe, hat when Sheep *but* one against ano-her, a stor n follows; And the Sheep of Christ observe, that when the Shepherds are at variance

*Quisquis fidem se tenere credit, unitatem teneat.*

Cypr.

1 Cor. 1.  
13.

*Spiritus Sanctus est unus.*  
Eph. 4. 16.  
1 Cor. 12.  
4.

Job. 4. 36,  
37.

*Use, 1.*

Hos. 10. 2.

variance, and contend amongst themselves, the Church is endangered. It is never more merry with Wolves and Foxes, than when the Shepherds are together by the ears; lamentable are those Flocks, miserable are those Sheep! *Divide & Regna* was *Machiavel's* rule, and the old Serpent makes use of it; nor doth he labour in any thing more than in blowing of the coals, and increasing the heat, of contention, betwixt God's Ministers, by his Incendiaries: well knowing,

First, That *nisi in altercando veritas amittitur*, by heat and humour of contention, the very Grounds and Maxims of Religion are to be shaken; which, of all other things, should be most certain and indubitate.

Secondly, That it is very hard and difficult for men, whilst they avoid one extremity, not to run perversly into another (as *Austin* sheweth); for whilst one party opposeth another with heat and haste, it telleth out, that each of them, looking towards the adverse Tenet, do proceed to some contrary extremity of Doctrine, as dangerous, many times, and sometimes more, than that that which they do oppose.

Thirdly, Discord amongst these doth more especially reproach and disgrace Religion, and exposeth it to the scorn and derision of the World. For this cause (saith *Chrysostome*) are we become a reproach to Jews and Gentiles, because the Church is rent into a thousand factions: This, Ecclesiastical History verifies; And not onely so, but it hath raised up bitter persecution against the Church. The cruell persecution under *Dioclesian* was occasioned chiefly by the petulancy, pride, and contentions of Pastor's and Bishops (saith *Eusebius*). And two hundred thousand people were slain in the garboyle which followed upon the Schisms of Popes (saith *Walsingham*).

Fourthly, Whilst the Guides of God's People, Amphibena-like, strive one against another, which should be the Master-head, the Body is in danger: It is impossible to follow our Leaders, when their Faces look a contrary way, and their backs are to each to other: *Quem fugiam scio, quem sequar nescio*, (as *Cicero* sometimes said of the faction betwixt *Cesar* and *Pompey*): Our people know not what to do when their guides call them contrary waies, and they are so distracted, that many times they

Publius  
Mim.

De Gen. ad  
lit. l. 9. c. 8.

Chrys. in  
Gal. c. 1.  
Euseb. vit.  
Constant.  
l. 2. c. 60. l.  
3. c. 12.  
Socrat.  
Hist. Eccl. l.  
1. c. 3.  
Sozom.  
Hist. l. 1. c.  
15.  
The: Wal-  
sing Hist.  
Angl. in  
Hen. 4. p.  
420.  
Plin. Nat.  
Hist.



they put on a resolution to fly all, and follow none. These are some of the evils, which Sathan knows will follow upon our discords and contentions: And these, in a great measure, we have found to be the effects of our discords and contentions, which we have reason to bewail; and not onely so, but in the second place,

To pray earnestly to God, that he would be pleased to compound those differences that are amongst us, and work a holy concord amongst his Servants, and blesse and prosper all pious and lawful undertakings this way, and to guide his Servants, that go about that work, that it may be successeful (so far as it may make for his Glory and the Churches good): It is no easy task that is undertaken; It had not need to be a shaking hand, that drawes strait so small a line; far more comfortable would it be (if God so please) to take away the Subject of the Question (saith one), that those who are of one Family, may be of one heart and mind. Let us pray for this, (so far as may stand with God's good Will,) and let us endeavour in our several Callings and places to procure it. Such was the desire of Mr. Calvin of the Churches peace, that he professed, he would willingly travail over all the Seas in the World, to put an end to the differences of the Church. *Blessed are the Peace-makers, Math. 5. 9.* And so this Doctrine is of *Particular Use*, both to Magistrates and Ministers; to Ministers and all the people of God.

If the Dressers shoud be as one in the Service of their Master, then far be it for Magistrates and Ministers to counter-work one against the other; seeing the Magistrate is (as you have heard) the *Minister of God* as well as the other; Both are employed to do service for one Master; These, like those two Sticks or rallies mentioned *Ezek. 37. 16, 19.* are to be one: Both together, like *Rachel* and *Leah*, will better build up the *House of Israel*, the *Church of God*, then asunder; when Magistrates, (Christ's Substitutes in his *Kingly Office*,) and Ministers (Christ's Substitutes in his *Priestly Office*,) say one another, as Butter flies below. or Spars above; then all stands firm; but if discord arise betwixt these, both Callings suffer by it. As *Sampson* (herefore) said unto his Brethren of *Judah*. *Swear unto me that you will not fall upon me your selves, Judg. 15. 12.* so may

Use 2.

Math. 5. 9.

Use 3.

And now  
O s s.

Rom. 13.

4.

Ezek. 37.

18, 19.

Ruth 4. 11.

Judg. 15.  
12.

Senec. in  
Thebard.

the Minister lay unto the Magistrate, and the Magistrate unto the Minister; for if contentions arise be wixt thee, and one seeks to pull the Sword out of the others hand, we may lay as *Jocasta* sometimes said weeping over the malice of her two sons *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, *Tu times illum, & ille te; ego utrumq;*, sed *pro utroq;*: Thou fearest him, and he feareth thee, I fear you both, because I fear the destruction of you both.

Mark. 9.

49.

Aug. Epist.  
Hier. inter  
opera Hier.

Yet more Particularly, God's Ministers of the Word are especially interested in this businesse, and to be exhorted (seeing they are as one) that, with one heart and hand, they give themselves to the Lord's work, and be at peace amongst themselves.

*Augustine* passionately lamented the differences that were betwixt *Hierom* and *Ruffinus*, two famous Pillars of the Church, and dressers of God's Vineyard; Wo is me (saith he) that I cannot find you both together; how am I moved; how am I greived; how willing would I be to fall down at your Feet? I would weep according to my Power, and begg according to my Love, now of the one for the other, and then of both for both; and for others also, (who with great perill and scandal see you), that you would not suffer these great dissentions to spread. And great cause we have to do so; for.

Eph. 4. 12.

1 King. 6. 7.

Gen. 11. 5.

First, It would be remembred that all our Labours should meet, in that one term, the edifying of the Body of Christ that is, his Church, *Ephes. 4. 12.* Now, the Church of Christ is not built up with blowes and noise: The Matter of the Temple was framed in *Lebanon*; at the setting of it up in *Zion* no stroak was heard, neither of *Axe* nor *Hammer*. Confusion of Languages hindred the building of the *Tower of Babel*; so variety of opinions and strife of tongues, is a great lett to Temple-work: whilst our Languages are so variable that we cannot understand each other, or for our Impatiency will not, the progresse of the Church is hindered. Our contentions are a scandal to those that are without, and a great hinderance to those that are within; It keeps many from us; opens the mouths of many against us; weakens the hands of such as remain with us, and encourageth others to forsake and leave us: when as by Unity and Concord, the credit of our Ministry would be greatly strengthened; our Doctrine more regarded, and become more fruitful and powerful



erful in the hearts of our people, as appears by that we read, 1 Cor. 14. 25. Where the content and agreement that was found amongst God's Servants in their Ministry, is rendred as the reason of that ignorant man's falling down on his face and worshipping, this extorted from him an acknowledgment that God was in them indeed.

1 Cor. 14.  
25.

See the  
parable of  
the wolves  
of the  
dogs and  
the  
wolves

Secondly, The great advantage that we give unto the enemies and adversaries of the Truth, would not be forgotten. *Melancthon* (a man famous in his Generation) perswading the Protestants, in his time. to be at peace and unity, propounded to them a Parable of the Wolves and Dogs, who were marching to fight, the one against the other; the Wolves sent out their Scout to know the strength of their Adversary; the Scout returns, and tells the Wolves, that indeed the Dogs exceeded them in number, but yet they needed not to fear them, for he had observed, that the Dogs were not one like another; Besides, he had observed in them, that they did march as though they were offended, rather with themselves than with their enemies; grinning and snarling, yea, biting and tearing one another, as if they would save their enemies a labour; nor did they keep their ranks, nor observe any order in their march, wherefore let us not be discouraged (said the Scout to the Wolves), but march on resolutely. You can easily apply it: Our discords are the sweetest Musick in the ears of Papists, Anabaptists, &c. they have weakned us & strengthened them. Sirs, (said *Dion* to his contentious souldiers,) your enemies see your mutinous behaviour, (pointing to the Castle wherein their enemies were;) Oh! that we would spend more then a few thoughts upon it; our enemies see, and are glad to see, and make use of what they see, in beholding our differences and discords, and clap their hands to see us wrieing ours. Highly to be commended were *Basil* and *Eusebius*, who perceiving the *Arrians* to improve a difference that was betwixt them, to the prejudice of the Orthodox Faith, were soon reconciled, and united their forces against the common enemy. And we read in story that *Aristides* perceiving the open scandal that was like to arise by reason of the contention sprung up betwixt him and *Themistocles*, he besought him mildly after this manner; Sir, We both are no mean men in this

Commonwealth; our dissensions will prove no small offence unto others, nor disparagement to ourselves: Wherefore, good *7 hemistocles*, let us be at one again, and if we will strive, let us strive who shall exceed the other in Virtue and Love: Oh! that there were such a strife between Minister and Minister! Such a strife would be our glory.

Thirdly, Unity and concord amongst God's Ministers is very acceptable, and pleasing unto God, and delights his spirit. In the 2 *Chron.* 5. 13. we read, that when the Trumpeters and Singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praying and thanking the Lord; there the House *was filled with a Cloud, even the House of the Lord*: God drew near, and manifested his gracious presence amongst them. And, *Acts* 2. 1, — 11. Divers spake in divers Languages at once, yet all consented in the thing which they spake, for all spake *the wonderful things of God*; and then the Spirit of God was amongst them, and *fell on them*, and that *in the likeness of cloven tongues* (not of cloven hearts). Thence Interpreters conclude, *Animarum unio & concordia, est optima dispositio ad recipiendum Spiritum sanctum*, that unity and concord is the best disposition of the mind, for receiving of the holy Ghost. But on the other side God is not present with his favour; his spirit abides not where discord and dissension is: That merry *Cardinal* intimated as much to his fellows, in the Conclave; when they could not agree about the choice of the Pope, Let us (said he) untyle the House, *quia Spiritus sanctus nequit ad nos per tot testa ingredi*, because the Holy Ghost cannot get in unto us through so many Tyles: Differences and contentions amongst us, keeps Gods spirit from us: Nay, yet more;

It causeth God to be highly offended with us, and to smite us when we agree not, that we may be made to agree together. A very remarkable passage hereof we read in *Socrates*, great difference and contention did arise betwixt two famous Bishops, *Epiphanius* and *Chrysostome*, insomuch that in a rage they parted asunder, using some unchristian imprecations; I hope, said *Epiphanius* to *Chrysostome*, that thou shalt not dye a Bishop; and I hope, said *Chrysostome* to *Epiphanius*, that thou shalt not return alive into thine own Country; both which fell out accordingly:

2-Chron. 5.  
18.

Acts 2. 1,  
— 11.

μεγαλὰ  
ῥήματα.

Socrat. Ec-  
cles. Hist.  
1.8. c. 13.  
17, 21.



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dingly : for *Eiphanius* dyed at Sea, as he was returning home ; and *Chysoftome* was deprived of his Bishoprick, and dyed in exile. Many were slain in taking parts ; the Cathedral Church and Senate Hou'e in *Constantinople* was burned to the ground, in pursuit of revenge ; A fearful president of Gods displeasure against the discords of his Servants ; think how God loathes that which he so severely punisheth : *Ridley* and *Hooper* could not agree about *black* and *white*, God made them to agree in *red*.

Lastly, The after-throes, that we put our Mother the Church unto, by our Dissentions, would be laid to heart ; *Rebecca* finding a struggling in her Womb, cryed out *Why am I thus ?* So saith the Church, Oh ! why am I fruitful of Children ; when they prove such dissenting and disagreeing Children ? Time was when it was said by the holyest men that then lived in the Church, *non minoris esse laudis non scindere Ecclesiam, quàm Idolo non sacrificare*, that it was no lesse praise-worthy, to abstain from rentning the Church, then to forbear sacrificing to an Idol : These things well considered, would (without all question) work somewhat towards unity and concord between dissenting Brethren (whose divisions do cause great *thoughts of heart* in every faithful Christian who desires to see our Vines and Figg-Trees flourish). And provoke them to use all good means of reconciliation, and hearken to all lawful proposals that may make for peace. Now what these *meanes* are that by Gods Ministers must be used whereby this unity and concord amongst them may be attained, would be shewed ; And so (besides those general directions before given) these particular Rules are very useful.

First, Let us make our peace with God ; for till that be done, no peace can be expected with man, *Phil. 4. 7, 9.* It is in Judgement that God divides our hearts, *I will divide them in Jacob*, &c. *St. Basil* lamenting the discord that was in that Church, imputes the cause thereof to mens contempt of their Heavenly King ; As did the troubles of *Israel* and the *Judges*, arise from this, that there *was no King* in *Israel*. Questionless, our dissensions are Pœnal and Judicial punishments, for that wilful Rent which hath bin made amongst us ; and till God be appealed still

dissension

Gen. 25.  
22.

Dienf.  
Alexand.  
Apud.  
Nauib.

Judg. 5. 15

Phil. 4. 7;  
9.  
Gen. 47. 7.

Basil. Afect.  
p. 187.

Zach. II.  
14.

differtion will abide. You may read, *Zach. II. 4.* of two Pastoral Staves. wherewith the Flock of God is fed; the one is *Beauty* (which signifies safety and protection) the covenant made betwixt God and his People; the other *Bands* (which signifyeth unity and concord amongst God's People. Now the Staff *Beauty* God takes and breaks, shewing their wicked dealing with the Covenant of God; then *Bands* cannot hold: This is our case, (it is to be feared) our covenants with God have bin violated, we have broken the staff *Beauty*, and God in his just judgment breaketh *Bands* that it holds not.

Essex.

Secondly, Let our care be to stock our selves well with Heavenly wisdom, that Heavenly wisdom which is from above; that is, with the knowledge of Divine things. Such I hope is the Resolution of the associated Ministers of this County, as appeares by their agreement. *We resolve through the grace of Christ to contend daylie, to the comprehension of that Ministerial knowledge and wisdom, whereby we may understand our way and to study more, and strive after that excellent Wisdom, and Art of winning Souls, &c.* Indeed we professe ourselves to be *Wisdom's Schollars*, yea, *Wisdom's Children*: Now *Wisdom* looks to be justified of her Children, *Math. II. 19.* and she is justified by them, when they shew forth the fruits of it in their carriage, which fruits are laid down by *St. James, 3. 17.* to be these;

Math. II.  
19.

Jam 3. 17.

First, *Chastity* or *Purity*: That is pure which is without mixture and (so understanding it) it suffers not Light to be mixt with Darknesse, Truth with Error, Superstition with Religion; these cannot stand together, *2 Cor. 2. 17.* *We are not* (saith the Apostle) *as many who corrupt the Word of God:* (the word is taken from Hucksters, or deceitful Vintners, who mixe their Commodities) *We do not Huckster it, it still retains a pure and chaste mind in our Breasts, an pure affections in our Hearts to the Truth, so that it will not suffer us to admit of any error; or do any thing against the Truth, but for the Truth. Unity without Verity is no better then Conspiracy, if it be joynd with falsehood; it is not Chastity but execrable Adultery* (saith *Cyprian*). Hence was it that such care was had in the Primitive times to maintain the Truth, and not to give way to the smallest Errors.

2 Cor. 2.  
17.

μαθηλέω-  
οντες



Errors, where the consequence might prove great. In the Council of *Chalcedon* there arose a difference about one little word, a *Monosyllable*, the question was about *Ex* and *In*. The Heretiques (condemned then) confessed Christ to be *ex duabus naturis*, composed of two natures at first; but not to be *in duabus naturis*, not to consist of two natures after; and for that *In* they were thrust out. In the Council of *Nice* the difference was lesse (one would think) about a little letter; a man would think it but a small difference betwixt *ἐκ* and *ἐν*, it was but one letter, a small *Iota*, and yet (as *Iheodoret* witnesseth) right Believers could not be brought, either to admit the one, or omit the other: Nothing is to be neglected as little, from which great things may arise. So, for the placing of words, what difference hath bin, and is? as betwixt *sola fides* and *fides sola*, nay, very pointing may alter the case, as, *John* 17. 3. The *Arrians* in making the *Comma* after onely, would seclude the Attribute, the true God from the Son and Holy Ghost. It is not *Chastity of spirit* to have our minds corrupted, from the simplicity that is in Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 3. Corruption in Judge ment is the most dangerous corruption of all other, worse then corruption in manners, (saith a grave Divine); as the Leprosie in the head was of all other Leprosies the most dangerous and destructive, *Levit.* 13. 44. The Priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head: had the Leprosie bin in the hand or feet, even that had made him unclean; but being in the head he is utterly unclean, saith the Text.

Secondly, *Peaceableness* is a second fruit that proceeds from wisdom from above; it causeth us to flye strife and contention what may be, and, if it be possible, to have peace with all men. *Abraham* being indued with this wisdom, being provoked by *Lot's* Herdmen, desired *Lot* that there might be no falling out betwixt them, for that they were Brethren; and for peace sake, divid'd the Land, and gave *Lot* the choyce to take which hand he would: This will prevail with us to silence our own private opinions (if we perceive they tend to the disturbance of the peace of the Church) according to the Apostles Rule, *Rom.* 14. 22. Hast thou faith have it to thy self, thy particular and private perswasion of the Liberty of all dayes, and free use of the

*Parva non sunt parva ex quibus magna proveniunt* Damasc. *Joh.* 17. 3.

2 Cor. 11. 3.

Mr. *Hildon* *Psal.* 51.

*Levit.* 13. 44.

*Rom.* 12. 18. *Gen.* 13. 8, 9.

*Rom.* 14. 22. Explained.

Hip. Trent.  
p. 62.

the Creatures (and other things of an indifferent nature) keep private to thy self, and do not divulge thy opinions, (they not being absolutely necessary to Salvation) whereby the peace of the Church may be troubled, and the consciences of others perplexed; Better an unnecessary truth should be lost, than the publique peace disturbed, and the unity of the Church lost. The advice of the Trent-Historian is; Sometimes to yield to the imperfections of others, and for pity to accommodate to that which in rigour is not due, yet in equity convenient.

Eph. 4.1,  
5.

Thirdly, *Meeknesse* and *Gentlenesse* is another branch of that Wisdom that comes from above; This meeknesse of wisdom will give a Charitable censure of other mens sayings and actions, and take things (not in the worst, but) in the best sense; it shuns all bitternesse of contention about differences in our reasoning about them: If we reason one with another, it will cause us to do it in a Brotherly manner, and to follow the Truth in Love, Ephes. 4.1, 5. It removes groundlesse jealousies and suspicions, which we are apt to have one of another, (which is the cause of many needlesse distempers amongst us, and hath bin): It will cause us to lay aside all odious Names, and Words of Reproach which serve onely to provoke and engender strifes. We should sooner be re-united, if these new-born Names of *Independent* and *Presbyterian* did not keep us at such a distance (saith one that knows much.)

1 Cor. 14.  
32.

Fourthly, *Tractablenesse* or *easinesse to be intreated*; It causeth a man to hearken to advice and counsel, and reverently to yield to Reason; and submit to the Judgement of Superiors. *The spirit of the Prophets is subject to the Prophets*, saith the Apottle, 1 Cor. 14. 32. Those who teach are subject to the scanning and examining of other Teachers, whether their doctrines be sound and good: and so to submit to their censure and judgement. There are those who will persist in their own conceits and fancies, albeit they have no sound ground, nor sufficient reason, nor evident proof to induce them to their false persuasions, yet they will still hold them, albeit all the Ministers in the World be contrarily minded; These want this Wisdom which is from above, which causeth us to be tractable, and not willful.

Fifthly,



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Fifthly, It is full of mercy and good fruits : whereby, deeds of Charity seem not to be meant, (for they are not the Subject of that discourse) but Mercy towards them that are out of the way, and err from the Truth. Those who are wise will pity such, and mercifully seek to reduce them to rights, by all means of Humanity and Love, so *Rom. 14. 1, 2, 3.* There must be no despising of him that is weak, but a receiving of him in Love. If there be difference in Judgment, yet should not this sever us in our Affections ; though they err, and cannot see the truth in many matters, (as we think we do,) yet *God hath received them* to mercy, and they may be God's dear Children, and faithful servants, as well as we our selves, (agreeing in Fundamentals). Till the Lord clear those truths to us, wherein we differ, we should pity one another, pray for one another, love one another. *Polycarpus* and *Anicetus* Bishop of *Rome*, differed in opinion about Fasting and Observation of daies ; yet they lived in love, as *Irenæus* witnesseth in a Letter that he sent to *Victor*, Bishop of *Rome*, and which giveth this Testimony of the Church then, and before his time, That all such which held contrary Observations, did notwithstanding hold fast the Bond of Love and Unity : 'Tis my Brother *Parmenian* (said *Optatus*). So *Calvin* of *Luther* ; Though *Luther* call me *Devill*, I will call him Brother, & esteem as my Brother and the faithful Servant of Christ. Without Question, this wisdom will keep one Minister from branding another with scandalous names, &c. and cause them rather (as the Ministers of this Association profess) to bear with one anothers differences that are of a lesse and disputable nature, without making them a ground of Division.

Sixthly, This Wisdom is without Partiality, It will not have the Faith of God in respect of Persons : Not this to be the Truth, because such a man holds it, (as we fancy) : *Hierom* said (but he said amisse when he so said) that he had rather err with *Origen* than think the Truth with other men : And it was too much for *Nicephorus* to say, That he was as safe in *Chrysostom's* opinion, as he was in the Word of God : This is to glory in men, which may not be. We may trust too much to Antiquity ; The ancient Fathers and Councils are to be revered, but not to be confided in : we may assent unto them as *Ancients*, but not as *Oracles* ;

*Rom. 14.  
1, 2, 3.*

*Euseb. Ec-  
cles. Hist.  
lib. 5. c. 23.*

*1 Cor. 3.  
21.*

they may have our minds easy and inclinable to their opinions, but not fettered and captivated thereunto: The best men are but Problematical, they speak probab'y (oftentimes), It may be thus, or, It is likely to be thus. It is the Spirit of God, in the Holy Scriptures, that speaks Dogmatically and Certainly: Our dealings and proceedings are appointed to be in *Yea* and *Nay*; *Yea*, *Yea*; *Nay*, *Nay*; but God's are *Yea* and *Amen*. We are not then to captivate our Judgments to any one, but to be informed by the truth, and, without respect of Persons, to believe the truth, and embrace the truth, as from the mouth of Christ himself, the Author of Truth.

Seventhly, *Without Hypocrisy*; not speaking one thing, and minding another, as did *Arrius* the Heretick, who being called upon to recant his errors, and subscribe to the *Nicene Creed*; he craftily, to delude *Constantine* the Emperour, gave him in writing a Profession of Faith, which he, and other of the Clergy that were of his party, held, which was sound and Orthodox; but in his bosome (say some) he had wrot his own and their damnable Heresies in a Paper, and clapping his hand upon his bosome, protested before God, That that was the Faith which they believed; and being afterwards called to his Oath, about the Truth of that he seemed fainedly to subscribe unto, whether or no he believed as he had subscribed; he carryed his former paper, wherein his own opinion was written, under his Arm, and laying his hand on the Book, swore, that as he had written so he believed; however, he notoriously dissembled, and played the Hypocrite, seeking by all cunning waies and means to overthrow that Faith which he had subscribed; raising up tumults in *Alexandria*, setting the whole City in an Uproar; through parts-taking: which Perjury and Hypocrisy of his, God severely punished, for he no sooner was departed out of the Emperour's presence, (after he had the second time subscribed to the Canons of the *Nicene Council*, and craftily sworn that he believed as he had written) but he was taken with a great Lask, and, going to the stool, voided, with his excrements, his guts; and blood, together with the Spleen and Liver, gushed out (saith *Socrates*), and so he died like a Dog: And thus you have heard what an excellent mean *divine Wisdom* is of Unity and

Concord

2 Cor. 1.  
20.

Socrat.  
Eccles. Hist.  
lib. 1. c. 19.  
& 25.

See heere

what death  
Arrius  
the heretick  
dye for  
his  
false  
perjury &c



†  
Jer. 45. ult.

Concord, and a preservative against Discord; Had we but this, what need we more? And yet, in the Third place,

Let us (if we desire Concord) practise the Lesson of *Self-Denial*, and be good Proficients in that; *Seekest thou great things for thy self, seek them not.* *Augustine*, and with him almost thirty *Bishops* besides, had learned this Lesson of Self-denial, whilst they agreed either to admit partners into their See's, or else to lay down their Episcopal Authority, for the Unity of the Church; Thus they reasoned with themselves, Did Christ descend from Heaven into our humane members, that we might be made his Members, & *nos de Cathedrâ descendere formidamus*, and are we afraid to come down from our Sees to prevent division in Christ's Members? The like zeal (as *Ruffinus* shews) was in *Gregory Nazianzen* against himself, to avoid the troubles of the Church, *Si propter me est illa tempestas*, &c. If this tempest be by reason of me, take me and cast me into the Sea (like *Jonas*), and so let this Tempest cease: where are those that will thus deny themselves for peace? In all our Discords and Contentions in the Church, there is too much *Self* to be seen. What was said of *Lucilla's* faction, may be truly said of the Divisions and Fractions that are at this day amongst Ministers; Anger bred them; Pride fosters them.

It were easy (as one saith) if it were not beyond an Auditor's patience, to derive all our Schisms and Contentions, from the *Concupiscible* or *Irafcible* Appetite, and resolve them, either into *Ambition*, or *Avarice*, or *Pride*, or *Envy*.

Nothing hath more ruined the Church of God, corrupted Religion, overthrown Piety, than the *Ambition* of the Clergy. *Korah* takes it grievously that the Priestly dignity was translated to *Aaron*, and challengeth *Moses* therein, of partiality; as if he had preferred his own Kindred, and followed his private Affection, rather than God's direction. Hence arose a Schism, and rent amongst the people, by which means much mischief followed, *Numb. 16. 1.* *Diotrephes* was ambitious of pre-eminency; he affected high place, rule, and Authority over others, 3 *Epist. Joh. 9. 10.* and was a great disturber of the Churches quiet; *Arrius* (before mentioned) being ambitious of a Bishoprick, and missing it, stirred up so much discord in

See how  
the ambition  
of the Clergy  
what a  
Numb. 16.  
1, 2. mischief  
it makes in  
the Church  
of God

3 Ep. Joh.  
9. 10.

See  
Luthers  
prayer  
and ambitious  
ministers and  
corruptors &

2 Tim. 6. 5.

Exod. 26.  
34.

Rom. 16.  
17.

2 Tim. 4.  
20.

Deut. 13.  
4.

2 Pet. 2.  
15.

Acts 20.  
23.

Boys his  
Remains on  
Hab. 1.

1 Tim. 6. 4.  
Phil. 1. 16.

Alfred  
Chron.  
p. 520.

sowing his tares of *Arrianism* in the field of God: And what a Plague, the Ambition of that *Papish Prelate*, hath bin to the Church, Who knows not? with such Ambitionists the Church hath ever bin pestered; which caused *Luther* to make this prayer. *A Doctore glorioso & à Pastore contentioso, liberet Ecclesiam suam Dominus*: From vain-glorious and contentious Preachers, the Lord deliver his Church,

*Covetousnesse*; That puts to the hand, and is a furtherer of our Divisions: Some make gain their *godlinesse*: they are the golden Bells and Pomegranates which are upon *Aarons* Roabes, that causeth many a seditious *Corah*, to invade the Priestly function; That which they chiefly affect is the satiating of their *Avarice*. This was the White that those Authors of Schism aimed at, as appears, *Rom. 16. 17*. It was the love of the World, that caused *Demas* to forsake *Paul*: And it was the deceit of *Balaam's* wages that drew him to seek the ruine of God's *Israel*; and from this base covetousness have many of our late divisions arose. *St. Paul* was free from this Vice, *Acts 20. 23*, and *Luther* professed of himself that he was never tempted to covetousnesse, and in this (saith one) I could wish that we were all *Lutherans*; then I doubt not, but there would be lesse contention, and more peace amongst us.

*Pride*, that is likewise a principal cause of our disorders; It is a Bastard begot betwixt a *Learned Head*, and an *unsanctified Heart*; which being once conceived in the soul, it causeth it to swell till it bursts, *1 Tim. 6. 4*. *St. Paul* tells us of some that Preached Christ of contention, *Phil. 1. 16*. that is, they out of Envy and Pride, desired to be esteemed better Preachers then he was. *Nazianzen* speaking of such as raised contentions in the Church, attributes it to the Pride that was in them, *Spirituales isti fastuosi &c.* These spiritual proud men, judging and condemning all but themselves, and accounting of every thing too too lightly, when they are so disposed withdraw themselves from our company, and refuse it as ungodly and wicked: *Luther* shewed too much of this, for when the Reformation at *Wittenberg* was wrought in his absence by *Carlostadius*, he was so much discontented, for that it was done without him, that the doubled not to approve of those things, which (till then) he had disap-  
proved



proved, and to disapprove what before he had approved of, to the great disturbance of what was wrought. And a chief cause of *Theodotio's* heresie was (as *Aust.<sup>n</sup>* relates) a greater care to maintain his Reputation, than the Truth; For by the heat of persecution being driven to a denial of his Saviour, he thought it a disparagement to confesse his fault, and therefore laboured to defend it by maintaining one denial with another: And thus some there are that having posselt the World with a conceit of their abilities, study to defend what they have delivered, and maintain their opinions held, *Non quia vera, sed quia sua* (saith *Austin*) nor because they are true, but because theirs; fearing that otherwise they may suffer in their Reputation, which they seek to maintain more then the Truth.

*Anger* and *Envy* is nor seldom the cause of our Distractions; A froward man (saith *Solomon*) soweth strife, *Prov. 16, 28.* *Arrius* could not stifle his Envy against *Alexander* (who had gotten the Bishoprick from him,) but vents his fury against him, by accusing his Innocent truths of error and absurdity, and calumniating of his writings: Upon the like ground, *Novatus* made a faction against *Cyprian*. And divers others discontented Churchmen against their Bishops and Superiors. *Erasmus* speaking of *Luther's* writings, saith, that Many things he spake, had others said, had not bin complained of; the self same things are condemned as Heretical in his writings, that in *Augustines* and *Bernards* Works, are read as Orthodox, and regarded as pious sentences. Now if in case we had learned this lesson of Self-denyal, all this evil would be cured, and our Church nor be pestered with so many discords as at this day are amongst us.

I shall end this Use with that Observation which *Pliny* hath of two Goats: They meeting together upon a very narrow bridge, under which a very deep and fierce stream glided, and seeing there was no going blindly back, nor passing by, nor contending for Mastery, they were content, that one should lye down, and the other passe over, to secure both their lives from death and danger: These are not times to contend in, let us deny our selves for the common safety.

Lastly, I have a word or two of Use to you, that are our Hearers; by way of *Caution* or *Admonition*; you have heard what

our

*Ad quod  
vult. Her.  
33.*

*Prov. 16.  
26.  
Therod. l. i.  
c. 2.*

*Eras. Epist.  
ad Card.  
Mog.*

*Plin. Nat.  
Hist. lib. 8,  
c. 50.*

*Use 4.*

our Duty is, we are to be as One in our Master's business; now then,

Rom. 16.  
17, 18.  
Explained.

First, Harken you to that which the Apostle saith, Rom. 16. 17, 18. *I beseech you Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have Learned, and avoyd them; for they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Bellies, and by good words and faire speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple.* The Apostle puts on the Person of a Supplicant, not for his own profit, but ours: The Parties concerning whom the Apostle useth this vehement intreaty, are the *Authors of Dissention*, such as cause *Divisions and Offences*; The Duty required of us, is, first to *mark them*, have a jealous eye over them, and put as it were a *mark on them*, that you may know them from others, and not be deceived: Secondly, *avoyd them* as you would a Serpent (saith one) in your way, and poyson in your meats. The Reason of this Admonition, is two-fold: First, *they serve not Christ, but their own Bellies*, whatever they pretend of the service of God, they have base ends of their own; they *serve themselves*, and their own turns, whatever becomes of the service of Christ; knowing, that there is no fishing like to that in troubled waters: Secondly, *they deceive the hearts of the simple by faire words*, As Cheaters use to do, drawing on to play, and then cozen, by cogging of the Dye.

Joh. 10. 5.

1 Tim. 6.  
5.  
Sozom. lib.  
7. c. 7.

Jas. Ren de  
vit. Pantif.  
p. 42.

And this is that which our Saviour requires of his Sheep, that they hear not *the voyce of the Stranger*, Joh. 10. 5. they that are the Sheep of Christ, will not follow such, but avoyd them, and flye from them; lest they should be seduced by them; It is not safe to reason with such seducers, 1 Tim. 6. 5. If He might not, much lesse a private Christian. We read in Ecclesiastical Story, of *Placilla* the Emperesse, that when *Theodosius Senior* desired to conferr with *Ennomius* the Heretique, she dissuaded him very earnestly, lest being perverted by his speeches, he might fall into Heresie. As did *Anastasius* the second Bishop of Rome, who whilst he sought to reduce *Acacius* the Heretique, was seduced by him.

Secondly, If differences happen to fall out amongst them, be not offended thereat. *No unto the World because of offences* (saith



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(saith Christ,) *it must needs be that offences come, but wo be to that man by whom the offence cometh*, Mat. 18.7. there is a threatening, a condemning *wo* belongs to him that gives the offence; yet there is a lamenting a condoling *wo* that belongs to them that take the offence; and to these our Saviour intends the former part of his speech, *Wo to the World because of offences*; that is, to the better part of the World, who are apt to take offence, and to be turned out of the way of holiness, by reason of such offence as is given.

Indeed, it is a great stumbling block to many, and the Devil takes great advantage by it; to see God's Ministers to dissent and differ in Judgement, in Affection, &c. And *wo to such* as are the cause thereof; But yet, *Wo to us* if we are easily scandalized at this, considering,

First, That we are foretold of it by our Saviour, *It must needs be that offences come; Needs* in respect of man's frailty, Sathans malice: and God's providence, (who knoweth well how to make a wholesome treacle of the poysonful Viper) permits it should be so; And so St. Paul tells us that *there must be differences* in Opinions, Errors, Heresies, *that the approved may be known*, 1 Cor. 11. 19. The most wise God will keep his Children in breath, and exercise their graces, and try his own by these fires of contradiction; yea, and purifie his truth (it may be) thereby: How many excellent truths have bin brought to light (at least better cleared) by oppositions? Austin by occasion of the error of Pelagius examined more diligently, & so propounded more clearly, the truth in the points of Predestination and Free will than others his Antients: If Arius had not held a Trinity of substances, with a Trinity of Persons; and Sabellius an Unity of Persons, with an Unity of Essences, that Mytery of the Trinity had not bin so clearly explained by those great Lights of the Church: Wormewood is bitter to the taste, yet it is good to clear the eyes. We may say with the Hebrew sentence, *Nisi ipse elevasset lapidem, non fuisset inventa sub eo hac margarita*: If the stone had not bin lifted, the pearl had not bin found under it: the striking together of the flint and steel, sends forth many lightsome sparks to enkindle many a shining Taper. Now he is *willful* that will stumble at a stone, that he is before hand warned of.

Secondly,

Mat. 18.7.  
Interpreted.

1 Cor. 11.  
19.

See howe  
Wormewood  
is good for the  
eyes tho bitter  
as the figg

1 Cor. 13.  
9.

Eph. 4. 13.

Acts 15.  
38, 39.

ubi Luth-  
rus Calvi-  
ni bene  
convenit.

So +  
then ministers  
of god differ  
not in the  
fundamental  
points but in  
these even  
matters  
opinions

Secondly, The best of God's servants in this life *do but see in part, and know in part*: Whilst we live here, it cannot be expected that God's Servants should agree in all points. Perfect Unity is not to be found in the Church of God, till the number of all the Elect be fulfilled, and the Church be come to her Perfection, *Ephs. 4. 13*. The light whereby we see in this State of mortality is very feeble and very different, in regard of the Spirit's illumination, the Capacities of men, and their diligence in Study, Prayer, and other meanes of attaining knowledge. Whence it is that Unity of opinion in the Church is very contingent, now greater, now lesse, never absolute in all Particulars. *Barnabas was a good man*, and yet *St. Paul* saw more then he, and clearer then he; He saw how unfit it was to take *John* and *Mark* with them, who before had given great offence by departing from them as *Pamphylia*; This *Barnabas* saw not: *Samuel* was surprised with a little sleep in the Temple, and did not answer God at the first and second call, but ran to a dim-sighted *Eli*; but at the third Call he made answer: So some Ministers who are the dear Children of God, may not perceive God speaking in his lawful Magistrates; nor be able for a time to distinguish betwixt God's voyce and Man's, in things of an indifferent nature, which they may in God's time, and then they will contend no more about them: I am now going to a place said *Grynem*, (on his death bed) where *Calvin* and *Luther* now agree well together. In Heaven we shall agree, though not on Earth.

Thildly, The differences that are amongst God's Ministers concern not *Fundamentals*, but *Circumstantial*s, not the Primitive Articles of Faith, which are necessarily to be believed; But concerning other *Secondary* points or *Theological conclusions*, fit for discourse of a Divine. Indeed there are those in the Church that hold damnable tenets; but they are not of this Church. Faithful Ministers differ not in matters of Faith, but in matters of opinion; as about Ceremonies, Administrations, and the like. Such is their difference, as was betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas* before mentioned, not like that which was betwixt *Simon Peter* and *Simon Magus*: And therefore let not any stumble, and take offence at the Different Judgments that are amongst them, seeing



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seeing all agree in that which is necessarily required for thee to do; if thou wouldst be saved.

Thirdly, If there be difference amongst God's Ministers, be not thou one of those that make the breach wider; but endeavour, what lyes in thee, that they may accord. Hearers are many times too factiously inclined, as the Apostle shews, *1 Cor. 1. 11, 12. & 3. 3.* they made a choyce to themselves, of this or that Preacher, whom they would follow, with contempt of the rest, (albeit God's faithful Servants); So is it amongst us at this day (as hath been shewed before). Some affect those onely that are of the same Judgment with them, (it may be Episcoparian, or Independent, or Presbyterian, for so now we use to distinguish them) albeit all teach the same fundamental truths, and the same Christ; and those that are of another Judgment than they are of, they utterly dislike, and will not afford them the hearing: Others affect those onely that are most eminent for gifts, with a neg'ect, yea, a contempt of others; As that Frenchman of whom *Zanchy* speaks, who being advised sometimes to hear Mr. *Viret* as well as Mr. *Calvin*, answered, that if *St. Paul* himself should be upon the earth, and preach at the same time when Mr. *Calvin* preached, he would not leave him to hear *Paul*. It is true, Christians may acknowledge a difference of Gifts in Teachers, and prefer one before another, and esteem best of that Ministry by which he hath received most good, and got most profit; yet ought we to esteem all that are good; hear all as occasion is offered; reverence all; and blest God for all.

This factious disposition in the Hearers of the Word, hath been a great cause of dissention amongst Ministers; for when People have engaged their affections for their Pastors, and have swelled one against another, in their quarrel (as the Apostle intimates by that speech of his, they are apt to do, *1 Cor. 4. 6.*) then they come and endeavour to engage their Teachers, for their Affections: You have an Instance of this, *Joh. 3. 26.* *John's Disciples* fall a daring of *Christ's Disciples*, about purifying, and (as it seems) receiving the soyl, they come to *John*, and would engage him in the quarrel, and incense him against Christ; telling him, that he erected up a Ministry, and bapti-

Soe hear  
the difference  
off  
*1 Cor. 1.  
11, 12, &  
3, 3.  
Episcopasie  
independance  
& presbyterians  
necessite paye  
& opinions  
a franche  
mon world  
rather than  
Calvin than  
St Paul &c*

*1 Cor. 4.  
6.  
Joh. 3. 26.*

See Differences  
in Religion  
among Ministers  
are compared  
to Thieves  
and murderers

Ezek. 37.  
1.

zed likewise, and that all men followed after him. Thus it was, and thus it will be, and hence it comes to passe (oftentimes) that discord and dissention is raised betwixt those Ministers, who otherwise would live and love as Brethren: Too too apt are we to claw this Itch of our People, and so it soon breaks forth into a Blyster. And thus, I have acquainted you with what concerns you, as well as with that that concerns our selves, for the preventing of discords and contentions amongst us, and breeding of Unity. Oh that these things were thought upon, and made the right use of! Look upon Thieves and Murderers, they are at peace amongst themselves; and shall not we? Shall they go with one heart about their Master's work, and we with a divided heart about God's work? Shall they go more friendly to Hell than we to Heaven? that were a shame for us: To conclude, we read Ezek. 37. 1. in that Vision of dry bones, that bone lay from bone scattered, till the Spirit did blow on them, and then bone came to bone, and stood up, and were a mighty Army. Bone hath been from bone a long time; Oh that the Spirit of Wisdom and Judgment were given to us, (which is promised to be given under the Gospel) that we might be united in one! then we should be inabled to joyn our strength against the common Adversary, and God should have the Glory. We have done with the Persons expostulated with, and with the Name given to God's Ministers, and Number: Now we come to take notice of the Person expostulating with them.

Text

He said.]

Plutarch reports, in the life of Numa, that he was alwaies with the Goddesse Ageria; And many other Heathens, that we read of, used to have familiar parley with their Gods and Goddesse; as Herodotus amongst the Bythinians; Endymion amongst the Arcadians; and so others: Here wee see what familiarity there is betwixt the true God, and his Servants, the Ministers of the Word; he doth single them out from the rest, and talk familiarly with them, and acquaint them with his purpose and intent. For this is that which is imported by the Owners parley with the Dresser, about this Figg-Tree; That is the Note,

Doct.

God makes known his mind unto his Ministers, and acquaints them,



them, in a familiar manner, with his intents and purposes. He makes them acquainted with his mind, (as concerning his proceedings with his Church and People). He acquaints them with his grievances; makes known unto them his purposes and Intentions, what he is minded to do in the case. Hear what the Prophet *Amos* speaks to this poynt; Surely the Lord will do nothing but he revealeth his Secret to his Servants, the Prophets, *Amos* 3. 7. He will do nothing; *non faciet verbum*, he will not do a word; he will do no such thing as was before spoken of, in the former verse; no evill of Affliction, Pain, or Punishment, will he inflict on his Church, but he makes it first known to his Servants, and reveals (his Secret) *תלוי בטלוי סודו*, as *Theodocio* renders it & (as it may well be rendred, saith *Drusius*) his Counsell; for the Hebrew word signifieth as well Counsell as Secret, (albeit most Expositors read Secret rather than Counsell). Not as if God revealed all, that he doth in Heaven, unto them; But it is to be understood of things done on Earth (saith *Hierom*). Nor yet is it to be understood of all things, that God hath done in the World, from the Creation (saith *Parvus*) but especially to be understood of Punishments inflicted, (as before was noted) the purpose and decree of God to punish a people for sin, is his Secret; and this he evermore revealeth. Thus, before he brought the Flood on the old World, he revealed his mind to *Noah*, *Gen.* 6. 13. Before he sent Fire and Brimstone, to consume the Cities in the plain, he revealed it to *Abraham*, and then to *Lot*, *Gen.* 18. 17. & 19. 12, 13. Before he executed his Judgments on *Pharaoh* and his People, he revealed his mind to *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Exod.* 3. 19. Before he would destroy *Nineve*, *Jonah* shall be acquainted with his mind, *Jon.* 1. 2. and so for the sparing of it, *cap.* 4. 10. It was God's usual manner to single these out, and acquaint them with what he was about to do.

And yet it may not be thought, that this is the onely Secret that God reveals unto his Servants the Ministers; for there are other supernatural Secrets, such Secrets as no man can attain unto the Knowledge of, unlesse it be revealed unto him of God, such are those mysteries of Religion, *1 Tim.* 3. 16. These God is pleased to make known unto his Servants, the Ministers of the

*Amos* 3. 7.  
Explained.

Sedh.

*Par.com.in*  
*loc.*

*Gen.* 6. 13.

*Gen.* 18.  
17. & 19.  
12. 13.  
*Exod.* 3.  
19.  
*Jon.* 1. 2.  
& 4. 10.

*1 Tim.* 3.  
16.

1 Cor. 2.

12, 16.

Interpreted

Eftius in  
loc.

the New Testament, and of these Secrets the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. 2. 12. *We have the Spirit of God, that we may freely know the things that are of God; And again ver. 16. Who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ:* as if he should have said, albeit no man can perfectly know the Counsels and mind of God, yet God is pleased to reveal to us (that are his Ministers and Apostles) by his Spirit of Revelation, the mind of Christ in these matters; and so he removeth a tacite Objection, that might be made against their preaching of spiritual matters; If none know them, why do you preach of them? Yes, we know them, that we may make them known unto the Church of God. Before we render you the Reason, it will not be amisse to answer a Scruple or two: It may be questioned,

Quest. 1.

Pl. 25. 14.

Dan. 2. 28.

Gen. 4. 21.

Num. 22.

9.

Resp.

Are these *Dressers* the onely men that are acquainted with God's Secrets? Doth not the Scripture tell us, that *the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him?* Psal. 25. 14. yea, and sometimes with them that fear him not, Dan. 2. 28. So to *Pharaoh*, Gen. 41. 1. 2. So to *Balaam*, Numb. 22. 9.

It doth so: and it cannot be denied, but that others, as well as they, are acquainted with them, but the ordinary outward means, whereby the Godly become therewith acquainted, is by their Ministry; neither *Pharaoh*, nor *Nebuchadnezzar* knew that Secrer, till God's Servants revealed it.

Secondly, To the wicked sometimes God is pleased to reveal his mind, but then it is either for their conviction and condemnation, or else for the Churches confirmation; as appears by that we read, Judg. 7. 13.

Quest. 2.

Doth God reveal to these all that he intends to do? Is not much of his Will and Counsel concealed from them?

Resp.

Mat. 24.

36.

No meer and mortal Creature was ever made privy to the whole Counsel of the Highest, no not the Angels of Heaven, Mat. 24. 36.

Secondly, All that God is pleased to make known, is not made known to any one man, but so much of his Counsel as is fitting for him to know: the best know but in part. The Familiarity that God had with *Elisha* was great, and yet the *Shunamite's* losse was concealed from him, which he was not ashamed



med to confesse, 2 King. 4. 27. Nathan was deceived, in his approving of David's purpose to build God an House, 2 Sam. 7. 3. the Spirit of Prophecy rests not alwaies on the Prophe.s.

Thirdly, Nor doth God reveal to All alike, That may be revealed to a Babe or Suckling, which is concealed from the more judicious. Elisha, the Servant, knew something that was hid from Elijah, his Master, even whilst Elijah was upon the very threshold of Heaven, he knew not that God had revealed his departure to Elisha; and thence it was that he would so gladly have shaken him off at Gilgal, at Bethel, and at Jericho. 2 King. 2. 2, 3. And this God doth, for two Principal Reasons; First, to maintain his own Prerogative; And, Secondly, For his Servants Humiliation, lest they should be exalted above measure through abundance of Revelations. In naturall Revelations, the greater Wit, and deeper Judgment, carries it; but in divine, in the Revelations of God, the favour of his choyce swaies all, and not the power of our Apprehensions.

Let me now give you the Grounds or Reasons of our proposed Doctrine before I put it to Use.

One Reason, why God makes known his mind unto his Dressers, concerning his proceedings with his People, may be this; To maintain his Servants Honour and Dignity, and that the World may see in what credit and esteem they are with God, notwithstanding they are despised and contemned in the world. We are made (saith the Apostle) 1 Cor. 4. 13. as the filth of the World, or (as the Word may be rendred) the Sweepings of the World, or as the dirt that is scraped (saith a good Expositor) from off the Pavement thereof, (and we are the off scouring of all things to this day; The Dung-cart (saith another) that goes through the City, into which every one brings and casts his filth: But albeit they are thus in the World's eye, yet they are otherwise in God's; they are a sweet savour unto him. And God is pleased to give the World to understand, by this his dealing with them, that they are both of his Court and Councell.

Secondly, These Dressers are near to God, they are his Secretaries, and evermore at his Elbow, (as we use to say of some Attendants upon great Personages,) they are his Chaplains in Ordinary and have more frequent converse with him than other

2 King. 4.

27.

1 Sam. 7. 3.

See the parting of Elisha with Elijah &c

2 King, 2.

23.

2 Cor. 12.

7.

Reas.

1 Cor. 4.

13.

Trap. in loc.

1 Cor. 2.

16.

ment:

1 King. 18.  
15.

Joh. 15.

15.  
*Hec pro a-*  
*micitia no-*  
*stra non oc-*  
*cultavi.*

Tiber.

John 21.  
20.

Colof. 2.3.  
*Amb. in*  
Pfal. 118.

*Beda in*  
*Evang.*  
*Joh.*

Jer. 36.2,  
—7.

Ezek. 3.  
17.  
Act. 20.  
26, 27.  
Vers. 30.  
Vers. 35.

men: *As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand* (saith the Prophet *Elijah* to *Obadiah*, 1 King. 18. 15. *I call you not servants* (saith our Saviour to his Disciples); *for the servant indeed doth not alwayes know what the Master doth, but I have called you Friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you*: John 15. 15. that is, all things requisite to your Salvation, I have imparted to you, as to my Friends. And Friends (as you know) will discover their secrets unto their Friends: yea, they are *Bosome-Friends*, as *St. John* was, who leaned upon Christ's breast, John 21. 20. Now the bosome of Christ is the *treasure of Wisdom*, that wherein all the treasure of Wisdom and Knowledge lay hid: Those breasts (saith *Ambrose*) did *John* suck, those profound Myfteryes and Secrets wherewith his Writings are more enriched, than the Writings of any other of the Apostles (saith *Beda*). Had he not had that free access to Christ's breasts, he had not bin acquainted with those Secrets: Those hidden, and Heavenly Myfteryes, made known to him above the rest; he had out of the bosome of *Jesus*: So Gods Ministers, having more converse with God then other; and being his Friends and bosome Friends; cannot but be acquainted with more of the mind, and will of God then others ordinarily are.

Thirdly, God acquaints his Ministers with his mind, that they may make known to others what He makes known to them. The Visible Sun casteth a more Radiant and bright Beam upon Pearle or Glasse, that reflecteth it again, then it doth upon grosse and obscure bodies, that dead the Rayes thereof: So the Sun of Righteousnesse casteth the fairest lustre upon that Calling, which most of all illustraterh his glory. Thus God willeth *Jeremiah* to take a Role of a Book, and write therein all the words that he told him, concerning *Israel* and *Judah*, and acquaint them therewith; which he did according'y, Jer. 36. 2. — 7. The like did *Ezekiel*, Cap. 3. 17. so the rest of the Prophets. *St. Paul* shamed not to declare unto the Church of *Ephesus* the whole Counsel of God, Acts 20. 26, 27. He ceased not to warn them Night and Day with teares, vers. 30. shewed them all things that were necessary for them to know, vers. 35. Who is so fit to make known the Kings mind, as the King's Ambassador

Fourthly.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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Fourthly, God acquaints these especially with his mind, concerning his Vines & Figg-Trees, for that they are tender hearted, & are loath with *Hagar* to see the death and ruine of any *Ismael*. God is willing to be prevented; He had rather use the pruning hook, then the *Axe*; and therefore expostulates with his Dresser, that he might be moved and entreated to be sparing in the execution of his Judgments. And this was one chief reason why he had parley with the Dresser about this Figg-Tree; and acquainted him with his purpose before he struck the Stroak, that the Dresser might get upon it (as it were) and save it from the *Axe*, as *Zachew* did the wild Figg-Tree which grew on the way-side (whereon he climbed) and in so doing, preserved it from the curse, which other barren Figg-Trees met with: Christ could not curse it, when he saw such fruit upon it, as he was; Thus of the Reasons: Now for the Use.

Gen. 21.  
16.

We that are Ministers should walk worthy of this high honour, wherewith we are dignified; In that our Lord and Master is pleased to acquaint us with more of His mind, then He doth ordinarily to others, What manner of persons ought we to be? Surely He expects more holinesse and faithfulness in us, then he doth in others; we must endeavour to walk somewhat answerably to such great a mercy, and behave our selves as those, who converse much with God. The more we converse with God, the brighter should our faces shine; As did the face of *Moses* after he had bin in the Mount with God, *Exod. 34. 29.* To be with our selves (saith one) is to be in ill Company; To converse with the World, leaves filth and soyle upon us (as when we are amongst Colliers) but to converse with God, which our Calling requires, leaves a sweet smell of Heaven behind; and a dye and colour of another World which cannot be rubbed off. To hear a Minister discourse of the Earth, and things Earthly, to talk loosely and carnally, gives great cause of suspision that such a one is very seldom in converse with God, at least, hath not bin lately with him; Here is a *Vaile* in deed before the face that should shine; but whether the face of such, or *vail* of such, is most hated of God, is questionable.

Use 1.

Exod. 34.  
29.

You that are our Hearers, should be instructed and advised from hence to resort unto God's Ministers, and take counsel of them,

Use 2.

them, and be directed by them in the things of God.

We are all sick of an *Athenian* humour, and deate on nothing more then secrets, and are very inquisitive after the knowledge of State affaires: Resort unto your faithful Pastors and Dresters, advise with them; they can, and will acquaint you with such secrets, as no wit of man is able to find out; no attornment of Nature, no Mystery of Art, no Secretary of State can reveale and make known unto you: Christ that had it from his Father, hath revealed it unto them, that they might discover it unto you. *We speak the wisdom of God in a Mystery* (saith the Apostle) *even the hidden wisdom, which none of the Princes of the World knew*: this is that which God is pleased to make known by our Ministry.

In all our doubts about soul affaires, resort to them for Resolution; *Without controversie, great is the mystery of godliness* (saith the Apostle, *1 Tim. 3. 16.*) the mystery of godliness should be without controversie, yet a World of controversies have risen about it, many of which every Christian is not bound to trouble himself withall (for without all controversie, there are many in Heaven that never studied controversies) notwithstanding, there is none that hath a care to know God's will, but shall have occasion to question much about what they read and hear (as did the disciples often). And it is very necessary to seek for Resolution in such cases: Now, to whom shall we go but unto such as God hath revealed himself unto? *Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he might instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

In matters of Danger (as well as Doubt) advise with these, and take warning from them: *Watchman, what of the Night, Watchman, what of the Night?* they can tell you; *the morning cometh, and also the night, and they will rightly advise you: If you will enquire indeed, enquire you, Return and come,* *Isa. 21. 11, 12.* These stand upon the Watch-Tower, and questionless (if they be not asleep) see more then those that stand below in the Valley. Had any other then *Elijah* seen from *Carmel* a Cloud arising about an hands breadth, they could not have warned of a storm coming, but the finest tempers are most sensible of change of weather.

But

*1 Cor. 2. 7,*  
8.

*1 Tim. 3.*  
16.

*Mar. 4. 10,*  
& 7, 17,  
& 10, 10.  
*Luk. 3. 10,*  
14.  
*Act. 8. 34.*  
*1 Cor. 2.*

16.  
*Isa. 21. 11,*  
12.

*1 King. 18.*  
44.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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But Ministers have not such certain knowledge of the mind of God, as formerly the Prophets and Apostles had; to whom God did infallibly make known his mind; nor that Familiar access unto him.

It is true, that in these dayes we have not that open access to God which the Prophets had, to receive immediate instructions from his own mouth; But we have, saith St. *Peter*, a *more sure word*, namely, the holy Scriptures given by inspiration of God; And these shew what sins do most offend God, and soonest pull down Vengeance from God: And in particular, what sins they are that cause God to punish with Sword, Famine, and Pettilence: On which ground many of God's Ministers observing the sins of this Nation, foretold that which we have felt to our cost, albeit they were but little regarded; which had they bin, we should not have sustained (or gained) this loss (as St. *Paul* said to the *Centurion*, *Acts* 27. 31.) And yet they tell us, that unless we Repent of our evil wayes, heavier things will befall us, then yet have done. *One* *wo* is *past*, but *two* *woes* *more* *there* *are* *to* *come*, for God will not be out-mastered. Make not a mock at their warnings; (as the old World did at *Noahs*, and *Lot's* Friends at his): A friend knows by the very looks and gesture of his Friend; what a stranger or an enemy knows, but by his actions: So it was with *Moses*, *Numb.* 16. 46. And so it is with God's faithful Ministers, out of the acquaintance that they have with their Masters proceedings, they know that evil is intended against us. I know what *Lactantius* spake of his times, our times have verified, Truth doth presage great evil to the speaker; And that of *Vives* is most true. Men dare not speak what you are bound to know. It is dangerous to teach what is honest to learn. if they speak truth to this wicked Generation, they must look to be questioned for their Liberties (it may be lives) as other of Gods Prophets have bin before them. If they foretell Judgments they shall be accused, as the Authors of them, *Exod.* 10. 7. As if the bathing of the Ducks in a Pond, were the cause of that fowl weather which follows after.

And hence it is, that some timorous Watchmen become Consonants, their people are as the Vowels, whose sound they follow; But this may not be, When the people would needs go up, *Moses*

D d

would

Object.

Resp.

1 Pet. 1. 19.  
2 Tim 3.  
16.

Acts 27.  
21.

Rev. 9. 12.

Numb. 16.  
46.  
*Veritas lo-*  
*quendi*  
*grandi pre-*  
*sagit ma-*  
*lum.* La-  
ctan. In-  
stit. 1. 4.  
c. 26.  
*Vives de*  
*caus.*  
*Artic. cor-*  
*rupt. lib. 1.*  
*Exod.* 10.  
7.  
*Jer.* 11. 7.  
19. 21.

Numb. 14.  
42.

would not stir a foot, for that the Cloud stirred not; nor may we consent where the word warrants not. Should we approve your wicked wayes, and sinful undertakings, or not reprove them; Judgment would be never the further off from us nor you, but come on more swiftly: Hear a Story.

Mic. 2. 6.

There was a City which stood in some fear of a Neighbouring Enemy; It was often given out, to the terror of the Citizens, that the Enemy was at hand, but it proved not so; whereupon Command was given upon pain of death, that none should dare to speak any more in that kind, and raise up such rumours as the approach of an enemy: Not long after, the Enemy came indeed, besieged, assaulted, and sacked the Town; And this Epitaph was made upon the Ruins of it, *Here stood a Town that was destroyed with silence.* When people say to their Prophets, *Prophesie not unto us,* they are near to ruine: It is dangerous when a City is in hazzard to tie up the Alarm Bell; to be regardless of the watchmans warnings, and take no notice of the firing of their Beacons: Happy we, if we would take warning: Proceed we now from the Persons between whom the Expotulation was, to the *subject matter* or substance of it.

Text.

*Behold, these three yeares I come seeking Fruit on this Figg-Tree and find none: Cut it down, Why cumberst it the ground?*

Wherein we have first an *Accusation*, or *sad complaint* of it; Secondly, a *Commiation*, or severe sentence denounced against it.

In the former, the Complainr, we may take notice, First, of the *Manner*, Secondly, of the *Matter* thereof.

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The manner of it intimated in that Adverb of Demonstration, or note of Observation; *Behold*, which calls for special regard: for whereever we find it (and we find it frequently in Scripture at least six hundred times, if some be not mistaken in the account) it is ever placed, before matters of great weight and moment, *very good* or *very ill*. Some resemble it to a Beacon set on a Hill, to give warning to the Country: It is like a Sea-mark (say others) to direct the sayler how to steer, and which way to direct



direct his course, that he may safely arrive at the harbour; Holy *Bernard* calls it *Notam stell feram*; a starry-note; a note that doth point out some rare matter, like a Hand, or Starr in the Margent of a Book, pointing and directing to some remarkable passage, and of great consequence; or, as the Starr which at the Birth of Christ hood over the House, and pointed to the wise men, where the Babe was: Others resemble it to *John the Baptist*, evermore the Van-currer of some excellent matter. It is used in three cases (principally), First, when some admirable thing, and of great note is presented to the Eye, as, *John* 1. 47, & 19, 5. The strangest sight indeed that ever mortal Eye beheld! This is *Ecce Indicantis*, an Eye *Ecce*.

Secondly, When some remarkable matter is commended to the Ear, which with the bodily Eye cannot be beheld, as, *Isa.* 7. 14. *Math.* 13. 3. *1 Cor.* 15. 5<sup>1</sup>, 5<sup>2</sup>. this is *Ecce Annunciantis*, an Ear *Ecce*.

Thirdly, It sometimes implies both these, and calls on us, for a serious attention, and consideration and due regard of what is seen and heard, as, *Math.* 21. 5. this is *Ecce Meditantis*, an Heart *Ecce*. And to it hath a double work, the one without doors, preparing the Ear to hear, or the Eye to see, what is said, or done, and presented to one, or both: as, *John* 19. 27. The other within doors, stirring up the affections, as the matter shall require, either to Joy, and Rejoycing, as, *Luk.* 2. 10, 11. Or to sorrow, as, *Lament.* 1. 22. Or to Love, as, *1 John.* 3. 1. Or to Fear, as, *Revel.* 1. 7. And in this latter sense, it is here (in my Text) to be taken. Behold this Figg-Tree, so as to lay to heart, the wrong I suffer by its barrenness; Look upon it, hear what I will say of it, and regard it well: And this exposition of the Word is given in Scripture, *Math.* 6. 36. Behold the Ravens; interpreted by St. *Luke*, Cap. 12. 24. Consider the Ravens. In a word; It is but a word, and yet the Epitome of that whole sentence, Let him that hath ears to hear, hear: Let him that hath Eyes to see, see: Let him that hath any fear of God before his Eyes, Behold, and take special regard of what is delivered. From hence we may take out this general Lesson.

Great attention and regard is to be given to matters weighty, *Deut.* 32. 1, 2. when *Moses* his Doctrine (weighty and winning)

*Joh.* 1. 47,  
& 19, 5.

*Isa.* 7. 14.  
*Mat.* 13. 3:  
*1 Cor.* 15.  
5<sup>1</sup>, 5<sup>2</sup>.

*Math.* 21.  
5.

*John* 19.  
27.  
*Luk.* 2. 10,  
11.  
*Lament.* 1.  
22.  
*1 Joh.* 3. 1.  
*Revel.* 1. 7.

*Mat.* 6. 26.  
*Luke* 12.  
24.

*Doct.*  
*Deut.* 32.  
1, 2.

Prov. 8. 6,  
8.

dropps as the Rain, and his speech distills as the dew, that it may soak and sink, and showres on the herbs, then both *Heaven and Earth*, must give ear and hearken: So, Prov. 8. 6. *I will speak of excellent things, &c.* Therefore, *hearken and give ear.* Indeed all the words of Gods mouth are excellent (as *Solomon* in the same Chapter speaks) and highly to be regarded, but some things are of special concernment, which must especially be regarded by us: And to things of that nature, we are in a special manner incited in Scripture, by two words especially; the one *Initial*, or in the beginning of a speech, which is this in my Text, *Behold*, the other *final* at the end of a saying or sentence, which is *Selab*; used frequently in the *Psalms*, albeit else no where, but once or twice in *Habakkuck*, Cap. 3. 3, 9. But where-ever we read it, it requires a stay, stop, or pausing time to consider seriously on the foregoing matter; as if he should say, *Mind that.*

Hab. 3. 3, 9.

The usual Incitement in the preaching of the Word, used by Prophets, Apostles, and the Servants of God, is, *Hear, Harken, Attend, Give ear, &c.* as appears by divers Scriptures both in the old Testament, *Psal. 45. 10, & 49. 1. Isa. 1. 2, & 7. 13, & 46. 3, & 51. 1. Jer. 2. 4, & 7. 2. Hos. 4. 1, & 5. 1. Joel. 1. 2. Amos 3. 1, & 4. 1, & 5. 1. Mich. 1. 2, & 3. 1, 9.* And in the New, *Acts 2. 14, & 15. 13. Jam. 2. 5.* And our blessed Saviour did both begin and end his Sermons, calling for Attention, as, *Mark 4. 9, 23, & 7. 14.*

Mark 4. 9,  
23, & 7.  
14.

Use 1.

This is a point that is very useful, and may very well be pressed; For it may be said of many Congregations, *This is a people that come nigh me with their lips, but their hearts are farr from me*; Or as St. *Mathew* hath it, *Math. 13. 15. This Peoples heart is waxen grosse, and their ears are dull of hearing*; There is a marvellous unaptnesse and untowardnesse in the very best, to attend to that which is of greatest concernment (and much more in the worst): that Judgment is upon many that is mentioned, *Math. 13. 13, 14.* Great need we have of a *Cynthia* to pull us by the ears, and awaken us: Many a drowsie Hearer sits before us, who (as singing-men use, to keep time by moving of the hand, so do these) seem to note every Observation with the nodding of the head: Or, if they be awake, it is at the relation of some matters of lesse moment. *Erasmus* hath a relation, *De*

Isa. 29. 13.  
Math. 13.  
15.

Math. 13.  
13, 14.

unbrâ



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*umbrâ Afini*, delivered out of *Demosthenes* the Oratour, who discoursing of matters serious, his Auditors fell most of them asleep: he to awake them, told them that he had a pretty Story for them. At which news, they suddenly started up: He tells them of a young man that hired an Asse to carry some Commodities for him from *Athens* to *Megara*, travelling in his journey in the heat of the Day, he couched under the Asse to take the benefit of his shadow; The Muletter who let him the Asse, denied him that benefit, saying, that he lett him the Beast to bear his burthen, but he lett him not the shadow of the Beast; the young man replied that he would have that benefit by his hiring: the difference was great, so that they grew from Words to Blows; And there, whilst all were gaping on *Demosthenes*, the Oratour brake off his speech; The Auditory desired him to go on with his Story, that they might hear the issue: The Oratour answered them, See what wise People you are, I told you of wholesome and profitable Observations, and all that that while you were carelesse; and, now I tell you of trifles, of the shadow of an Asse, you are all very Attentive. Surely this was the Reason why the Prophet *Esay* personated a *Ballad-singer*, *Isa. 5. 1.* He would sing his Hearers a song, that thereby he might provoke them to mind, and attend to such matters as were weighty. And if we propound unto you some Fables, or things feigned, it is to cause you to attend to truth's weighty, which you shall find in the moral of it.

*Ila. 5. 1.*

What care I *so Christ be preached*, let us seemingly be but as fools and Asses in your esteem, so we may cause you to attend and give regard to what is said. A cold People makes a cold Preacher; a dull Auditory, a dull Ministry: I might use many Motives to quicken your attentions, but (having spoken more largely of the poynt in another Text,) I intend not now to insist upon it; I shall onely commend unto you the practise of *Constantine* the Great, who (as *Eusebius* tells us) after long standing at a disputation concerning divine matters; he was requested by those Divines that disputed before him, that he would be pleased to sit down, and take his ease; he answered, *Nefas est habitis disputationibus de Deo, &c.* he judged it to be an impious thing, whilst disputations concerning God were held, to sit down

*Use 2.*  
*Phil. 1. 18.*

*Euseb. de*  
*vir. Const.*  
*1. 4. c. 33.*

1 Sam. 3. 3.

Isa. 32. 3.  
Act. 16. 14.

down and hear negligently: What think you then of those that sit down to sleep, and settle them to sloath? Good *Samu-ell* may sometimes be overtaken with a slumbering fit, but he is soon awaked. *The Ears of them that hear shall hearken*, saith the Prophet *Isa. 32. 3.* and *Act. 16. 14.* *God opened the heart of Lydia, and she attended on what was spoken*, and till God do the one, we shall never do the other. But I shall carry this Poynt no further: Now more Particularly.

Doct.

*Behold.*] What? That which God complaines of, the Barrennesse of this Figg-Tree, *i. e.* the unfruitfulnesse of the Jewish Nation, (in the Letter). but spiriually, of such as profess Christ in the Church: Observe (in General),

*Sin may not be looked upon with a regardless eye, or, God's complaints are not to be sleighted, or past over regardlessly*; It must be beheld, and so, as that the Heart be deeply affected with the sight of it, and what we hear concerning it.

Eze. 6. 11.  
& 21. 6.

This is commanded, *Ezek. 6. 11.* *Say, Alasse! for all the Abominations of the House of Israel, and 21. 6.* *Sigh therefore thou Son of Man* (saith God) *with the breaking of thy Loins, and with bitternesse sigh, before their eyes*: Such a sighing God requires, as may break the girdle, and this with bitternesse, and before the eyes of the People too; that they might be brought to bitter sighing, for their provocations spoken of in the Chapter before, and for the Judgments that should continually follow, which shall cause them bitterly to sigh, for that they did not sigh in time. The sighing of the Minister may cause sighing in the people, as *Origen's* weeping did (as formerly was said).

2 Pet. 2. 8.

Isa. 24. 16.

Psal. 44. 15.

16. &amp; 69.

9. &amp; 119.

53. 136.

2 King. 19.

1.

Ezra. 9.

2. — 6.

Isa. 16. 9.

&amp; 24. 16.

Jer. 9. 1. &amp;

4. 19. &amp; 13.

17.

Rom. 9. 2.

Phil. 3. 18.

2 Cor. 2. 4.

And this is commended in the Servants of God, who have laid to heart the sins of others (as well as their own), so as to be deeply affected therewith: So did *Lot* with the sins of the *Sodomites*, 2 Pet. 2. 8. he vexed and grieved to see God to be dishonoured by them; what he beheld with his Eye, and what he beheld with his Ear, that he beheld with his Soul, and was not regardless of it: So *David*, read *Psal. 44. 15. 16. & 69. 9. & 119. 53. 136.* So *Hezekiah*, 2 King. 19. 1. So *Ezra*, cap. 9. 2. — 6. So *Jeremiah*, 9. 1. & 4. 19. & 13. 17. So *Paul* *Rom. 9. 2.* *Phil. 3. 18.* & 2 Cor. 2. 4. *with many tears, and much anguish of heart*, he wrote to the *Corinthians* about the incest-



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incestuous Person, whom they connived at: And our blessed Saviour himself, *Luk. 19. 41.* Who have but two clear Records in Scripture of Christ's weeping, and both in respect of Sinne, *Joh. 11. 39. & Luk. 19. 41.* and that was for the sins of us, not for his own, for he had none.

*Luk. 19. 41.*

Shall I render you the Reasons hereof; First then, *In respect of God*, forasmuch as he is much wronged, grieved, and dishonoured by sin; It is loathsome, grievous, injurious, unto him; A breach of his Law; a defacing of his Image; a defying him to his face; Treason, Rebellion, against him: Now what Son can endure to see his Father wronged, abused, and not stand out in his Father's defence? Did not Nature so work in that dumb Son of *Craesus*, that when he saw one ready to slay his Father, it brake the strings of his tongue, and caused him to cry out, *Oh man, Do not kill Craesus!* And will not Grace prevail much more in us? If we love God (as we professe), we cannot be regardless of his Dishonour, *Psal. 69. 9.*

*Reas. Isa. 1. 24.*

Secondly, *In respect of Others; the Land in generall.* Doth not Sin cause a whole *Land to mourn*, *Hos. 4. 1, 2, 3.* (especially, Swearing), *because of Oaths* (saith *Jeremiah*) *the Land mourneth.* Then the Sinner in *particular*; Should we see one to rend and tear himself; gash and wound his carcase; pull out his own bowels; leap into a fiery Furnace; could we do any lesse then pity such a one, mourn for him; lament his sad condition? now, What do wilful Sinners other? Is not every sin the wounding of the Soul? Is it not a piling up of Faggots, casting another shovel full of brimstone into the Flame? And then Sinners themselves leap in after this. Who can look on this sad Spectacle with a carelesse eye? We often endeavour to deter young men from sinning, upon this Motive; You'l grieve your friends, break your Parents heart, undo your selves; I grieve for you with my heart: So would we do, if we did as we ought. *I beheld the Transgressours and was grieved*, *Psal. 119. 158.*

*Psal. 69. 9.*

*Hos. 4. 3. Jer. 23. 10.*

*Psal. 119. 158.*

Thirdly, *In regard of our selves*; For if we be regardlesse of sin, when we see it or hear it, we are in danger to be infected by it: However, it doth enfeeble us in the sin, (as the *Corinthians* for not mourning for that Incest committed,) and not onely so, but

*1 Cor. 5. 2.*

Ezek. 9.

but in the Punishment too, *Ezek. 9.* but if we grieve, it is a Testimony of our Love to God; Love to Man; and Love to our own Souls.

Use 1.

We are deeply guilty (then) before God, in so slight a passing over his complaints; and light a regard had of the wrong & dishonour that is done him by sin. Are not our Eyes? are not our Ears acquainted daily with the horrid Impieties, Prophaneations, Abominations, that are practised and committed? Yet who is affected with it, unlesse it be to laughter? (for such a Generation there is in the World, that can solace themselves as freely, to see men run into all excess of wickednesse and impiety, as if some great good had befallen them: ) Ah! that we should make our selves merry with that which angers God; is a burthen to him; and should cause us to mourn: It is the highest piece of a Divellish nature to sport at sin, none but Devils do it, (if the Devils in Hell are at any time merry or glad,) or if we should imagine that they did upon any occasion laugh and rejoyce; When is it think you, or at what is it, if not to hear men swear, blaspheme; to see them swill and be drunk, and commit other abominations, to the dishonour of God, and damning of their own Souls?

Use 2.

Let us not be like the Devill, but, contrary to him, and grieve for that which he takes pleasure in; let us take God's Cause to heart, and mourn for the sins of the times, whereby God is so highly dishonoured: which way can you cast your eyes, but you shall have sufficient matter administred unto you of grief and sorrow? Who can walk the streets and not hear a thousand Oaths and Curses in a day, (especially in some Market, or on some Fair)? Who can come into a shop, and not find lying, countenance, and deceit there? (that is as the Foreman of the shop, and hath the chief hand in putting off bad Ware: ) Whither can you come and not behold Pride and Vanity upon the Heads and Backs of all sorts, and Sexes? *Psal. 119. 52.* *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy Law* (saith David); and yet more, *Rivers of tears run down mine eyes because they keep not thy Law.* ver. 136. which, however some of the Ancient, (as *Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine*) yea, and some of our Modern Writers likewise, understand it to be spoken of

his

Psal. 119.

53.

Ver. 136.



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*his own eyes*, in regard of the transgression of them, and their offence ; yet it is generally understood, and ordinarily referred to *Men*, because they keep not God's Law, but break it daily. A Law, so righteous, holy, and good, and the Law of so great and gracious a God ; this opened the sluices of his eyes, and sent forth a swift Current of Tears. What would he have done (think you) had he lived in these daies ; to have heard our Oaths and Blasphemies, and beheld our sinful and wicked conversation ? Surely, he would have wept an Ocean. Our Times call for, not only a *David's Eye*, but a *Jeremiah's Head*, to weep day and night for the wickednesse thereof : Old men contemn God ; Young men provoke God ; All men offend God ; yet few or none are affected in the Cause of God. Complaining times (indeed) these are, the Poor complain of the Rich, that they are too cruel ; The Rich, of the Poor, that they are unthankful : The Buyer complains of the Seller, that he is deceitful ; the Seller of the Buyer, that he is unconcionable : The Borrower of the Lender, that he is uncharitable ; the Lender of the Borrower, that he is forgetful. Thus one complains of another, whilst God complains of all ; yet we can hear his complaints without remorse ; nay more, we can be merry when he mourns and grieves. It was once sad to see in *Israel* at once, a *weeping Saviour*, and a *deriding City*, Luk. 19. 41. How is it now (think you) to hear a God complaining, and a Nation mocking and persisting in sin, *Have you no regard, all you that passe by*, Lam. 1. 12. albeit all passe by with a regardlesse eye, and will not *Behold*, yet those that stand betwixt the Porch and the Altar should have regard. It is to the Dresser that the Visitor doth addresse himself, and make his grievance known, as you find in my Text, [ *Then said He to the Dresser, Behold,* ] What the grievance is that must be beheld, is in the next place to be considered.

Luke 19.  
41.

Lament. 1.  
12.

*These three years I come seeking fruit on this Figg-Tree, and find none.*]

Text.

The *Gravamen*, or fault complained of, is specified to be the *Sterility* and *Barrennesse* of the Figg-Tree ; He complaines not of the Imperfection or *Paucity* of Fruit, but of the *Nullity*, *He found none.* ] And this is aggravated.

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First, From the Time of standing (*three years*), time enough to Root and Settle : the Husbandman had not bin hasty with it, but long borne, and expected Fruit from it.

Secondly, From the *meanes* afforded to it, and pains bestowed on it, to further the fruitfulness thereof ; implied in these words, [*I come seeking Fruit on this Figg-Tree*] He had not bin wanting to it, it was a well-manured Tree, his eye had bin ever on it, it grew in his own Vineyard, yet not a Figg to be found on it. We will begin with the *Grievance* or fault complained of, the barrenness of the Figg-Tree.

*Text.*

*And find none.]*

*Jer. 24. 8.*

It seems by this that it was a harmlesse Tree ; none of those that bare such Figgs as *Jeremiah* spake of, *Ficos valde malos*, Figgs, *so bitter that none could eat*, Such fruit was not hid under the leaves thereof. Had such fruit growen upon it ; it may be, we would conceive that, it deservedly might be deemed to the Axe and fire ; but being only barren, it might be rather born withall. But we are to know that,

*Dost.*

*Barrenness in a Figg-Tree is fault enough.*

Had it bin a *Thorne* or *Bramble*, the Husbandman would never have expected Figgs from it ; For *no man gathereth Grapes of Thorns, or Figgs of Thistles*, but being a Figg-Tree (and so fitted for Fruit) and a planted Figg-Tree (as before hath bin the vined) and so qualified for bearing of good Fruit ; just cause there was to complain of its barrenness.

If we peruse the Scriptures, we shall find ; First, many sad complaints made by God against his People, for their very Omissions. *Judah* is complained of, and branded for their *not serving of God*, *Mal. 3. 18.* and *not sacrificing* is taxed, as well as *Prophane service*, *Eccles. 9. 2.* The People of God are blamed for *not stirring up themselves to take hold on God*, *Isa. 46. 7.* and for *not building of God's House*, *Hag. 1. 2.* The Oppressed had *no Comforter*, *Eccles. 4. 1.* The *Corinthians* are blamed for *not mourning*, and for neglecting due censure of the incestuous Person, *1 Cor. 5. 2.* Scripture is full of such complaints : There is *none that doth good*, the fear of the Lord is *not before their eyes*. Such like querulous notes do abound.

*Mal. 3. 18.*

*Eccles. 9. 2.*

*Isa. 46. 7.*

*Aag. 1. 2.*

*Eccles. 4. 1.*

*1 Cor. 5. 2.*

*Amos 6. 6.*

*Rom 3.*

*10, 11, 12.*

*Psal. 14. 2,*

*3.*

And



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And Secondly, For such like Neglects and Omissions, sad threatenings are frequently denounced against a People. He that brought not the offerings of the Lord in the appointed season, should be cut off. &c. Numb. 9. 13. Meroz must be cursed for not helping the Lord against the Mighty, Judg. 5. 23. Yea, whole Nations are threatened for not calling on Gods Name, Jer. 10. 25. Let him be who he will be He is lyable to the curie that doth the work of the Lord negligently, Jer. 48. 10.

Thirdly, For very Omissions men have bin not only threatened, but punished severely; As may appear in sundry Instances.

It was the not believing of God that kept Moses from entering into Canaan, Numb. 20. 12. The not Circumcising of his Son, had like to have cost him his life, Exod. 4. 24. 25. Eli's not reproving his Sons, lost him the Priesthood, 1 Sam. 3. 13. and the not slaying of Agag that lost Saul his Crown, 1 Sam. 15. 8. Moab and Ammon were bastardized and banished the Sanctuary to the tenth generation for an Omission, because they met not Gods Israel with bread and water in the Wildernesse, Deut. 23. 4. It was the want of a wedding Garment that excluded the Guest, from the wedding Supper, Math. 22. 12, 13. For want of Oyl, the foolish Virgins could not enter with the Bridegroom into the Bride-Chamber, Math. 25. 10, 11. And the not imploying of his Masters Talent, that cast the evil Servant into fetters. Math. 25. 25. and the not Visiting, Cloathing, Feeding of Christ's members, that will condemn the World, Math. 25. 41. In a word, every Tree that brings not forth good Fruit, shall be hewen down, and cast into the fire, Math. 3. 10, & 7. 19.

Sinful Omissions are not to be looked upon as bare Negations and Privations, but as breaches of a Positive Law, which commands the contrary: we are not only commanded by God, to abstain from evil, but commanded to do good; Every Negative includeth the Affirmative, as every Affirmative doth the Negative; This evidently appears, by that Exposition which our Saviour gives of the Law, Math. 5. 37. &c. So that there is the like Reason, of not doing good, and of doing evil; either way, the Law is transgressed: and against the one, as well as the other, the curse is denounced, Deut. 27. vers. 26. The breach

Numb. 9.  
13.  
Judg. 5.  
23.  
Jer. 10. 25,  
& 48. 10.

Numb. 20.  
12.  
Exod. 4.  
24, 25.  
1 Sam. 3.  
13.  
1 Sam. 15.  
8.  
Deut. 23.  
4.  
Mat. 22.  
12, 13.  
Math. 25.  
10, 11.  
Vers. 25.  
Vers. 41.  
Mat. 3. 10,  
& 7. 13.

Reas. 1.

Mat. 5. 37

Deut. 27  
26.

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of the Negative brings Death; and want of Obedience to the Affirmative, excludes from Life.

Secondly, Omissions proceed from Original corruption (for it is that which makes us unapt for good, and to leave undone what the Law requireth of us) and being a fruit of Original corruption, there cannot but be a great deal of guilt and iniquity in them, *Psal. 51. 5.* David accounteth his Original sin, as the corrupt fountain of all his impurities; and he makes way to it, with an *Eccē*; *Behold, I was shaken in iniquity, and in sin did my Mother conceive me.* Now who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, *Job 14. 4?* The Pelagians long ago denied any such sin as Original, or Natural corruption, affirming that as we are begotten without Virtue, so without Vice; and before the acting of our own wills, that onely is in man which God made. *Augustine* took this heresie to task, and very learnedly confuted it, albeit it is since revived by the Anabaptists: But not *David* alone, but *St. Paul* likewise chargeth his Omissions, as well as Commissions, upon his corrupt nature, *Rom. 7. 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25.*

Thirdly, And do we not profess to be the Servants of the most high God? now that Servant that will not do what his Master requireth of him, what doth he else but despise and contemn his Master? Not to obey is to disobey. Nor will we take it well from our Servants, if they should spend their time in idlenesse; and doing nothing; or excuse themselves, in telling us that they have not plotted with Theeves to Rob us and Spoil us, nor set our house on fire, nor served those who were our enemies, &c. We expect more from Servants then so; we hire them to follow our work, and do our businesse, and not to sit still and forbear onely doing of us any mischief; they are to do us good as well as no hurt: It is true, the best of God's Servants omit many things out of ignorance and frailty, that God requires; but a continual neglect and omission of open and enjoyned duties: proclaimes open contempt; Let us now apply this to our Use.

There are many that please themselves with a kind of Negative Divinity, who may be awakened by this Doctrine: A company of simple Ideots there are, who blesse themselves in their harmlesse life, they do no man any wrong; they cannot be

taxed

*Psal. 51. 5.*

*Job. 14. 4.*  
*Verba Pelagii: ut sine*  
*virtute, ita*  
*sine vicio*  
*procreamur;*  
*anteque*  
*actionem*  
*proprie vo-*  
*luntatis,*  
*id. so-*  
*lum in ho-*  
*mine est*  
*quod Deus*  
*condidit.*  
*Rom 7.*  
*18, 19, 20,*  
*23, 24, 25.*

*Use.*



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taxed with any grosse crime, they are *no Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, &c.* And it were to be wished, that more amongst us could say so; and that there were more civil righteousness and honesty amongst men, than is. *Athanasius* sometimes wished that there were more Hypocrites in the Church, in regard that publique sins were more infectious and offensive; So say I, in this Case: But yet, let such *Negative* men know, that all this they say is not enough, nor will it bring them to Heaven. *Ceasing from evil* is but one step thither, *doing of good* is the other, which must necessarily follow, if thou expectest Salvation. That *Pharisee* (whose outside onely had a fair shew, his inside being full of filthinesse) sounded the Trumpet of his own praise, not onely for the *Omission of evil*, but also for the *doing of good*. Luke 16. 15. whose righteousness if we exceed not, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Math. 5. 20.

And yet, what abundance of dead soyl, may be found amongst us, which brings forth nothing? Idle wretches that sleep out the time of grace (albeit their damnation sleep not) who return all Heavens Raine, and influence with a naked and neutral acceptance, no way answering the Sender's hopes. A barren Earth we call an unthankful earth; a barren Heart is no lesse an unthankful heart, as in the former verse you have heard.

The best of us have great cause to be much greived and humbled before God, for our omissions and neglects that we have bin no more fruitful in our places, and diligent in our Callings; that we receive no more good from the means of grace, then hitherto we have done. *Daniel* bitterly laments this. Dan. 9. 6, 10. So others of Gods Children, In matters of Faith; that which God chargeth *Moses* withall may be layd to our charge, Numb. 20. 12. *You believe me not, to sanctifie me, before the eyes of the Children of Israel*: and what our Saviour said to the two Disciples in their walk to *Emmams*, may be said to the best of us, *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken* Luk. 24. 25.

As we are *slow Faith's in believing*; so we are *slow Bellies in doing*; Our sayings in those duties of Piety Justice, and Charity, (which they that have learned Christ, are taught by his saving grace) are too too grosse and palpable; our Prayers are full of coldnesse, Zeal is wanting; our Hearing full of dullnesse, Attenti-

Luke 18.  
11.

Isa. 1. 16,  
17.  
Psal. 34.  
14.  
Rom. 20. 9.  
Luke 16.  
15.  
Mat. 5. 20.

Use 2.

Dan. 9. 6,  
10.  
Numb. 20.  
12.

Luke 24.  
25.

Tit. 1. 12,  
13.  
Tit. 2. 11.

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on is wanting; our converse with others, full of unprofitableness; Love and Charity is wanting: and yet few lay to heart, their sayings in these things (and the like) as they ought. It may be, if they fall into some grosse sin, Swearing, Lying, &c. they seem to be humbled for it, but Omissions of Duties are looked upon with a regardlesse eye: And there may be some Reasons rendred of it, amongst others these.

Omissions are not so contrary to God, nor are they so scandalous in the eyes of Men, as sins of Commissions (such as Lying, Swearing, Drunkenness,) these (with the Snayl) leave a stime behind them; But Omissions make no great noyse, and are sleighted, under a pretence of Infirmary, and do lesse trouble the conscience then the other.

Secondly, Affirmative precepts do not bind *ad semper*, as the Negative do: I am alwayes bound not to kill, not to heal; but the Affirmative do not bind to the ever doing of them all at all times. Now Intermission being next to Omission, (and under pretence of Christian Liberty) men do more easily fall into Omissions then Commissions and are lesse sensible thereof.

Thirdly, The Observation of the Affirmative Commandments, doth more crosse a man's nature (which is most contrary to virtues Commanded) and brings him under more opposition and hatred of the World, then the keeping of the Negative Precepts do; therefore we are more apt and inclined to omit the Duties of the Affirmative, than of the Negative, and be lesse humbled for them.

But if we be as we ought to be, we shall take to heart our sayings, in not being as we should be, as well as in being what we ought not to be; we shall be humbled before God for our not loving, not fearing, not trusting Him enough: Or our not honouring His Name; not sanctifying His Sabbaths as we ought, and for our other Omissions of Duties required, either by virtue of our General or Particular Calling: and that for these Reasons.

First, There is both more Virtue and Vice practised in Affirmatives, then in Negatives; It is more good to do good, then not to do evil; and more evil to do evil, then not to do good; Albeit both the Tree that brings forth evil Fruit, and

Mat. 3. 10.

Mat. 7. 19.

that



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that which brings forth no fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.

Secondly, In doing no good, it is impossible for a man to abstain from evil; for *not to gather, is to scatter*, in Christ's account: not to do good, is to do hurt; not to save life, is to destroy it. Virtue and Vice being extremes without mean contraries, which want a Medium, and therefore the absence of the one (*in subiecto capaci*) in a Subject capable of it, argues the presence of the other; So that if we be destitute of Virtue, then are we attended with Troops of Vices: If our Houses be clean swept of spiritual graces, then they are convenient lodgings for unclean Spirits; If we be not indued with knowledge, then we are blinded with ignorance; if we be destitute of Faith, then we are full of Infidelity; if we forbear to do good, then we prostitute our selves to all ungodliness: and being once drawn away from God, a man easily becomes insnared by his own lust, *Jam. 1, 14*. Besides God doth often in justice punish sins of Omission, by giving men up to the Commission of grosse and open sins: Now many are overtaken with the sins of the times, because they lament not the sins of the times? How many are given up to strong delusions, to believe lyes, because they receive not the Truth in Love? And how often is a mans idleness and laziness in not doing what he should, made an occasion of doing what he should not, as it fell out in *Dauids Case, 2 Sam. 11*.

Thirdly, Sins of Omission do exceedingly grieve the Spirit of God, and quench it in us; thence it is; that the Apostle having charged the *Thessalonians not to quench the spirit*, (neither in themselves nor others,) adds immediately, *Despise not prophesying*, *1 Thes. 5. 19, 20*. Now it is despised, (not onely when it is openly contemned, but) when it is neglected, and not attended unto. So *Israel* grieved, (yea vexed) Gods blessed Spirit in not hearkening unto his voyce, nor regarding his wonders, *Psal. 95. 10*. Fire (we know) may be quenched, as well by taking away the fuel, as by casting on water; So may the Spirit of God, as well by neglecting of the Ordinances, as by falling into other sinful courses. Besides, Omissions challenge the Power of Sanctification in us: Were we sanctified thorough

Mat. 12. 3.  
Mat. 3. 4.

Mat. 21.  
44.

Jam. 1. 14.

2 Thes. 2.  
10, 11.

1 Thes. 5.  
19, 20.

Psal. 95.  
10.

by

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by the spirit of God, we would make as much conscience to do what God requires, as to forbear the practise of that evil he forbids.

Fourthly ; The greatest loss that possibly can befall us, ariseth from our Omissions, and want of doing good ; and that is deprivation of Life and Happinesse ; which consists in the fruition of God (who is infinitely good,) and is lost by Omission, and want of good ; for *without Holinesse no man shall see God*, saith the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 14.* and the pain of losse in Hell, is more grievous then the punishment of feeling and smart ; albeit it be not so to our seeming ; Therefore, both in the Scriptures and Fathers, the torments of Hell are termed *damnation*, in respect of the losse, of an infinite good, which is God ; this is Hell in Hell, as the enjoying of God's presence is Heaven in Heaven. In all these respects (besides others that might be shewed) great cause we have to be greatly humbled before God for our Omissions and Neglects, to lay them to heart, and be much affected therewith,

Heb. 12.

14.

*Pœna Dam-  
ni penali-  
or, quàm  
pœna sensus  
Chrys.*

Use 3.

Heb. 13.

16.

And for time to come, let us all be shy and wary how we omit the doing of any Duty required, either in Publique or in Private : *To do good, and distribute, forget not*, (saith the Apostle), *Heb. 13. 16.* So to hear, pray, &c. forget not. It is a sin to omit our Duty ; more to omit it willingly ; but most horrible to do the contrary : It is not enough that thou art not an ill man, by sins of Commission against the Negative Commandements of God, but thou must shew thy self a good man, by thy conformity to Gods Affirmative precepts ; And as thou desirest not onely to escape the Damnation of Hell, but to obtain the Glory of Heaven ; So it is requisite that thou beest not onely careful to avoid those sins, which subject thee to the former, but that thou also dost those Duties, and embracest those Virtues whereby thou mayest be fitted and advanced to the latter. Say not, because I am not thus or thus, therefore I am as I ought to be, it is too poor a Counter, to be layd in so high a place : Suppose that no man can condemn thee for evil, yet unlesse God and thine own conscience commend thee for good that thou hast done, thou art far from God's Kingdom. It is not enough for the Minister to say, I have not seduced this People, nor led them



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them out of the way ; if he hath not instructed them in the right way wherein they should walk : Nor for the Magistrate to say, I never wronged the Poor, nor condemned the Innocent ; unlesse he can say with *Job*, I have stood up for them, and pleaded their Cause. Nor may the Landlord blesse himself in this, that he did never wring nor gripe the bowels of his Tenants, if he hath not succoured and protected them. *Let him that stole, steal no more*, (saith the Apostle,) *Ephes. 4. 28.* but, Is that enough? No, *Let him labour with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* And to for the Lyar ; let him not only cast off lying, but also speak the Truth unto his Neighbour, *Eph. 4. 25.* and to of every other ; *Let the wicked not only forsake his wicked wayes, but likewise turn into the wayes of Righteousnesse, Isa. 55. 7.* In a word, let all labour to have *Job's* Letters of Commendation, which he carryed from God to the World ; which did run in this Tenour, *He feared God, and eschewed evil ;* and remember the Point delivered, that, Barrennesse in a Figg-Tree layes guilt enough upon it, and is sufficient to expose it to the Axe and Fire. Omission of Dyer, brings diseases which cause death ; So Omission of Duties, brings damnation to the Soul.

As for those who are so far from being fruitful in good, that they are fruitful in evil, bearing naught else, but rotten, sinking, and unfavoury fruit, we shall not need to read to you their Doom, *He that runs, may read it.* If barrennesse in good be so full of guilt, and so displeasing unto God ; what think you will become of such Trees, as from the root of a filthy and fleshly heart, bring forth, like the *Vines of Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, Fruit as bitter as Gall? whose hearts within them *imagine mischief*. whose hands without them exercise cruelty upon the Earth ; whose feet run to evil, and are swift to shed blood ; whose ears are uncircumcised, eyes full of Adultery, and cannot cease to sin ; whose throats are open Sepulchers, whose tongues are used to deceit, under whose lips the poyson of Asps, and whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness? Shall *Dives* be damn'd that would not vouchsafe crumbs to hungry *Lazarus* ; what will become of those (then) that eat up the Poor as Bread, and grind their faces? Must they go Captive with the first, that are not

Eph. 4. 28.

Verf. 25.

Isa. 55. 7.

Job 1. 1.

Use 4.

Hab. 2. 2.

Deut. 32.

32.

Psal. 58. 2.

Psal. 26.

10.

Prov. 9. 10.

Acts 7. 15.

2 Pet. 2.

14.

Rom. 3.

13. 14.

Psal. 10. 7.

Luke 16.

22.

Psal. 14. 4.

Ames 6. 6,  
7.Math. 18.  
33.

Sorry for the affliction of *Joseph*; whither shall they be led and carryed, that have caused the affliction of *Joseph*? If he was bound hand and foot, who prosecuted his own right with extremity against his fellow-servant; whither shall they be cast that labour the unjust vexation of man, pretending title to that whereunto they have no colour of right? If they that did build, and plant, and marry, and give in Marriage (things lawful in themselves) were swept away with the Universal flood; whither shall the Tempest of God's fury carry them that blaspheme his Name, persecute his Messengers, contemn his Ordinances, & wallow in all manner of Voluptuousness? If they shall be sentenced that visited not Christ in Prison, &c. what will become of those that cast him into Prison? pulled the meat out of his mouth, &c? These things I will leave to your serious considerations, and proceed to speak of the *Aggravations* of the fault: First, from the *Time* afforded to it for bearing Fruit [*These three years*]. Secondly, from the *means* that had bin taken with it, that it might be fruitful; implied in these words, [*I come seeking fruit on this Figg-Tree.*]

As Scripture calls us to take notice of sin, so it doth frequently put us in mind of the Circumstances: for (as from hence you may Collect),

*Circumstances of a sin give Aggravations to it.*

So we find the *Quality* and *Condition* of the Person faulty, aggravates the fault, as, *John* 3. 10, & 13, 18. Sometimes the *Place* where it is committed is an aggravating circumstance of it, as, *1 Sam.* 2. 23. *2 Chron.* 33. 7. Sometimes the Aggravation ariseth from the *Time* of committing of it, as, *Isa.* 58.

3 4.

Sometimes from the *manner* of doing it, as, *2 Sam.* 16. vers. 22. *Isa.* 33. 1.

Sometimes from the *Means*, as, *Math.* 11. 24. and as we shall hear shortly more amply.

This is a Point might be made good Use of. We are not to judge of our sins by the substance onely, but weigh the Circumstances likewise with them in the ballance of the Sanctuary; and bring them into our account with the other; that our Repentance and Humiliation for them may be Answerable: But I shall

Doct.

Joh. 3. 10,  
& 13, 18.

1 Sam. 2.

22.

2 Chron.

33. 7.

Isa. 58. 3,

4.

2 Sam. 16.

22.

Isa. 33. 1.

Math. 11.

24.

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shall leave it to your own Meditations, and come to the Particulars : we begin with the *Time, ſeia ʼrēn.*

*Thēſe three years.]*

I ſhould try your patience (and that I would be loath to do) in relating the ſeveral Conjectures and Opinions of Expositors, concerning the *three years* here mentioned ; I ſhall only touch upon ſome of them, and then acquaint you with that which is beſt approved.

Some by theſe three years (in reference to the Jews) underſtand theſe three Times, *Before the Law ; Under the Law ; and Under grace :* before the Law when as God ſought that People by *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob* and the other Patriarchs : under the Law, when as God ſought them by *Moses* and the *Prophets* : under the Goſpel, when as God ſought them by *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*. Others underſtand by the firſt year, the Time *before the Captivity* of that People ; By the ſecond, the time of *their return unto Jery* ; By the third, the time of *Chriſt's coming* in the fleſh, to Preach unto them. One of theſe ways, moſt of the Ancients take.

*Ambroſ.  
Auguſt.  
Chryſoſt.*

Later writers conceive, that by theſe three years is to be underſtood, the whole time of Chriſt's Miniſtery on Earth, Preaching, and Working Miracles ; the *firſt three years* of his publique Miniſtery, he planted the Goſpel in the Land of *Jery* ; and in the *fourth year* thereof, he was put to death : All which times the Jews continued unconverted ; And to this time one year more was added, which was the time of the Apoſtles preaching, and labouring amongſt them : which they neglecting, going on ſtill in their impenitency, were afterwards cut down by the *Romans*.

Others are of opinion that our Saviour had an eye eſpecially upon his commings up into the Temple, at *three ſeveral and ſolemn feaſts* of the *Paſſover*, before his Paſſion. One was in the firſt year of his Publique Miniſtery, of which we read, *John* 2. 13, 14. at which time he found no fruit, but buying and ſelling Oxen, and Sheep, and Doves in the Temple, making the Houſe of God an Houſe of Merchandiſe.

*Joh. 2. 13,  
14.*

A ſecond coming to look for Fruit on that Figg-Tree, was in the *ſecond year* of his Miniſtery, of which we read, *John* 5. 1, —9. and then he wrought that Miracle in healing of a Cripple who

*Joh. 5. 1,  
—9.*

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lay at the Poole, having had an Infirmary eight and thirty years, for which the Jews cavil at Him, and persecute Him.

Joh. 6. 4. His third solemn going up unto the Temple, was, that we read of, *John 6. 4.* where he taught openly, but the People charged him to have a Devil; and the chief Priests and Pharisees are angry with their Officers for that they apprehended him not. No better Fruit did He find on that Jewish Figg-Tree at His three several comings up, to seek for it.

From this third Passover and solemn Feast, the Figg-Tree stood untill our Saviour's Passion, which time was the year of this Figg-Tree's reprimand; in which year it was that our Saviour propounded this Parable to the *Galileans*, and then, after that, this Jewish Figg-Tree began to fall; the Curse being executed by degrees upon it, as, God willing, you shall hereafter hear more fully. And this opinion seems most probable.

Leut. 19.  
13, 24.

But Lastly, Others conceive that our Saviour in mentioning three years, alludes only to that in the Old Law, *Levit. 19. 23, 24.* *When you come into the Land and plant all manner of Trees for Fruit (saith God), then you shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised; three years shall it be as uncircumcised to you, but in the fourth year all the Fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the Lord withall:* There was a Natural Reason of this Law as well as Political; The Civil and Political Reason, say Divines, was, for that the first Fruit of Trees being full of moisture and waterish, it was not so wholesome for the People, and likewise to restrain them from inordinate feeding on it (especially at the first) which might breed surfeits in them: But the *Natural Reason* was, for that a fruit-Tree requires one year to settle the Root after the Plantation; in which regard the Husbandman will not suffer a Tree new-set; the first year to bear; the second year the sap most commonly runs out in Leaves and Branches, and the time of Fruit is not yet come; but the third year (if there be any hopes of its fertility, and the soyle and season be any thing kindly) it beareth fruit, and is well loaden; This Reason may be admitted, albeit the former is preferred.

Vid. Willet  
in loc.

Theoph. in  
loc.

Now in Reference to us, who live under the Gospel, and are planted in the Church as in the Vineyard: By these three years some understand the three Ages of Man; Youth, Middle Age, and



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and Old Age: those three Ages which *St. John* makes mention of, and calls upon for fruitfulness, *1 John* 2. 12, 13, 14. Childhood or Youth; Middle age or Man-hood; Old age or Father-hood. In all these three several Ages God doth come to us, and seek for Fruit from us: In our Youth, *Eccles.* 12. 1. In our Middle age by Crosses and Troubles, by Changes and Alterations in our Bodies and outward States. In Old Age, by Aches in our Bones, decay of senses, by gray haire that are here and there upon us, *Hof.* 7. 9.

Others by *three years*, understand *many years*, a certain number being put for an uncertain; a definite for an indefinite time: and so we shall find that number used in Scripture, as, *2 Cor.* 12. 8. *I besought the Lord thrice*, that is, frequently: God doth come to seek fruit of man three years, that is, many years, before he commands him to be cut down. God deals with us (saith *Calvin*) as the Husbandman doth with his Trees; who allows time enough for the standing of them, and useth all means to make them fruitful, which if it prevails not, then he cuts them down, and fits them for the fire. And this Interpretation we may safely follow, and from hence lay down this Conclusion.

*God alloweth and alloteth to every Figg-Tree growing in his Vineyard, a due proportion of time for the bringing forth of fruit.* Or: Where he expects fruits, he alloteth time sufficient for the producing of it.

*Three years* you see the Husbandman bears with this Figg-Tree. Time long enough, to waite for the proof of it; for if the Figg-Tree bear not Fruit the third year, it will never bear (saith one). Had it bin a *Nut-Tree*, or an *Olive* (saith another), three years had not bin enough to waite; But it is enough for so growing and succulent a plant as the Figg-Tree is; and three years God alloweth it: all which time He waited, and made no complaint thereof unto the Dresser, nor denounced Vengeance against it (that we read of.)

To every Nation, to every Church, Congregation, and Particular Person, God allows a fit proportion of time for producing Fruit, (albeit to some more to some lesse, yet) to all sufficient: Three years He bore with this Figg-Tree; Forty years space the Children of *Israel* had given them in the Wilderness;

an

*1 Joh.* 2.  
12, 13, 14.

*Eccles.* 12.  
1.

*Hof.* 7. 9.

*2 Cor.* 12.  
8.

+

*Doct.*

*Cornel. a  
Lapide  
Mald. in  
loc.*

Heb. 3. 9.  
Gen. 6. 3.  
Ezek. 4. 5.  
Gen. 15.  
16.

Luk. 21.  
24.  
Rom. 11.  
25.

Math. 11.  
34.

Mat. 22. 2.

*Reas.*

*Object.*  
Mark 11.  
13.

*Resp.*

Math. 21. 1.  
34.

an hundred and twenty years He allotted to the Old World for Repentance: three hundred and ninety years He forbore the Idolatrous Israelites; four hundred years were granted the Ammonites, and with Antichrist He hath borne above one thousand two hundred years: mention is made of the times of the Gentiles, *Luke 21. 24. Rom. 11. 25.* They had time allotted them to come in, and before that time came, God bore with them above two thousand years: It is evident then, that God is not hasty, he allowes sufficient time for all, He looks not for his Rent before the Day, as appears by that we read, *Math. 21. 34. When the time of Fruit drew near* (saith St. *Mathew*), *He sent his Servants to the Husbandmen:* At the season, saith St. *Mark, 12. 2.* When the Rent Day was come, He sent that he might receive of the Fruit of the Vineyard; He allowed these Farmers time to make their Rent before he sent for it, all which time he forbore with patience.

This God doth that he may be justified, and every mouth stopped before Him; Should He require work, and not allow time to do it in, it might be thought Tyranny in Him; as it was in *Pharaoh*, to require the tale of Brick of the Children of *Israel*, and yet allow them no straw wherewith to burn their Brick; nor yet time to gather it.

But we read of that Figg-Tree which grew by the way-side, that it was cursed for its barrenesse, when *the time of Figgs was not yet come*, *Mark 11. 13.*

Some answer it thus, Had not man fallen, that Tree had not bin barren; for before the Earth was cursed for Man's transgression, all Fruits should have bin more frequent, and abundant; yea, almost continually like the Trees in the Paradise of God: And so our Saviour to shew, not onely his Power, but his Righteousness, cursed it; because it was not so fruitful as it was by Creation, taking no notice of the unfruitfulness of it; or of the want of Fruit which came to passe at this time of the year, by reason of the Curse through our corruption.

Secondly, That may be understood of the *Vintage*, and time of gathering Figgs (according to that of *Mathew, 21. 34. When the time of fruit grew near*, that is, of gathering, and Inning of it) which not being yet, Christ might well expect Fruit from it.

Thirdly,



Thirdly, Although the time of *Ripe Figgs* was not yet, yet *green Figgs* might have bin upon it, It was a season for some Fruit, albeit it had not attained to its perfection. The Figg-Tree (as before hath bin shewed you) is a plant (if not altogether barren) that yields a continual succession of encrease; whilst one Figg is ripe, another is green; Christ looked for some Fruit from that great shew of leaves; had he found but green Figgs only, it is likely that it should have escaped blasting.

*Vid. Dana-  
us Quest.  
in Evang.  
secund.  
Marc.  
Quest. 48.  
p. 192. 163.*

Fourthly, That punishment was not inflicted (properly) on the Figg-Tree, but upon fruitlesse and barren professors, signified by that Figg-Tree. That which was done to this Figg-Tree was done in a figure, Mystically and Parabolically; (For Christ did not onely speak Parables, but work Parables) and this was no other then a *Real Parable* of His: and that which Christ aimed at herein, was to teach his Disciples (and us in them) how much he hated an unfruitful Profession; and to foreshew what judgments should befall that barren Generation, for their unfruitfulness; For this end he took the liberty to destroy that Plant, (though without fault) and well he might; for as he made all things for his own glory; so he hath power to use them at his pleasure, that his Church may be edified, and his own name glorified.

*Ecds.*

It is an ordinary and usual Plea, that is brought by many; *want of time*. They would Hear, Read, Pray, &c. but they have no time to do these things; why, how comes that about? God requires no Duty of us, but he allowes us time to do it in, if we had but wisdom to apprehend it; *there is a time allotted to every purpose* (saith Solomon), *Eccles. 3. 1.* — 9. there is no Action nor Accident, intent and event, incident to the affaires of this life, but hath some part and portion of time layd out for it; Indeed there is no part of time there mentioned for Repentance, and bringing forth of good Fruits; nor is there any part of time layd out for sin and doing ill: and the reason may be this, for that well-doing is a duty which must be concurrent with every moment of time.

*Use.*

*Eccles. 3.  
1. — 9.*

The businesse of Salvation is to have every season, nor is there any time or season allowed for sin; no moment of time should be allowed to it: yet that which should have a share in all seasons, hath

hath the least; and that which should have no part of time, hath the most. It is no *want of time*, but *waste of time*, we have cause to lament; we are wanting to our selves, and that will make to our greater condemnation, (as in the next point you shall hear.)

Use 2.

Let no man be offended at the leasurely pace that God's Justice walketh. God allowes to the barrenest Tree a time, and a siring time for the bringing forth of Fruit; Let none grudge any that time which God hath lent them, but patiently waite *proving if at any time God will give them Repentance*. Where the Master of the House is liberal, the Steward should not be hold-fast and miserable; where God is merciful, man should not be cruel: And yet the very Saints of God seem sometimes to be somewhat troubled at God's patience, *Psal. 73.3. & 94. 3, 4. Jer. 12.2,3.* But that should not be: If God in Justice had destroyed the *Samaritans*, when the Apostles would have had them destroyed, How should they afterwards have bin converted by the preaching of Christ? Had *Demas* bin hanged as soon as ever he began to play the Thief, how should he have bin converted unto Christ upon the Crosse, or Christ have bin glorified by his confession of Him? Had God taken away *Paul*, when *Paul* began first to persecute the Church, how should the Church have bin confirmed in the Faith of Christ, by the Doctrine of *Paul* as now it is? If thou wouldst have Fruit, leave a Tree (saith *Augustine*): and if thou wouldst that thy Brother should Repent, grudge him not his life. And so we passe to a second Observation, which concerns the aggravation of the fault.

Doct. 2.

*Time allotted (for bearing Fruit) neglected, aggravates the fault; The longer time the greater crime.*

Ecclef. 9.  
12.

Jer. 8.7,8.

Psal. 49.  
20.

*Solomon* speaking of the ignorance of man, in not knowing of his time, compares him therein to *Birds* and *Fishes* that fall ignorantly and suddenly into a net or snare, *Ecclef. 9. 12.* And *Jeremiah* prefers the brute Creature before man therein, who yet is a Creature far more excellent, and better able to make use of his time, (being endowed with reason which they are not.) Now this must needs be an Aggravation to his sin, to throw his Crown to the ground, and become like the Beasts that perish, *Psal. 49. 20.* to be matched with a Beast, is a great disparagement



ment to man's nature; and to be like to a Beast (in that sense) is worse then to be a Beast indeed: To be a Beast, is without any fault in the Creature, God made it so; but to be a man, a Christian man, & yet to be like a Beast is not without mans fault and sin, and so Aggravates: More Particularly, you shall see the Point proved in sundry Instances.

This aggravated the sins of the Old World, as appears by that of *Peter*, 1 *Epist.* 3. 20. God waited *all the while* that the Ark was preparing, expecting their amendment and turning; but they jeered, when they should have feared, and so the Flood came and swept all, except eight souls from off the Earth: and it was layd to the charge of *Israel*, as an aggravating circumstance of their wickednesse, *Jer.* 8. 7, 8. the Fowls of the aire are preferred before them, as having more skill to know their time, and observe it than they had, and it is rendred as one cause of their great Fall; They should so fall as to rise no more, *vers.* 4. And this was that which Christ bewayled with tears over *Jerusalem*, *Luke* 19. 41, 42. *Oh! if thou hadst known at least in this thy Day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes;* This was no small aggravation of *Jerusalem's* sin, that she knew not what concerned her happinesse; No, not on that their Day; that time that was now lent unto them, that Christ was amongst them, and did Preach unto them; And what was likely to follow thereupon, Christ shews in the words following, *Thy enemies shall cast a bank about thee, &c.* And the reason of all these fearful Judgments that would befall them is this, *because thou knewest not,* (that is, wouldst not know) *the time of thy Visitation:* This likewise did aggravate the sin of that *Jezebel*, of whom we read, *Revel.* 2. 21. God gave Her space to Repent of Her fornication, but She had neither heart nor grace to make good use of it, for which God threatens to cast Her upon a Bed of sickness, and infli&a grievous Disease upon Her, and plague all those that commit adultery with Her, with many soare Judgments, and that He would sweep away her followers, the Children of her fornication with violent death, *vers.* 22, 23. and all for that she despised this mercy, of making good use of that time granted to Her, to bring forth the Fruit of Repentance. I shall not need to insist any longer upon the proof of the Point,

1 *Pet.* 3. 20.

*Jer.* 8. 7, 8.

*Luke* 19.  
41 42.  
*Enlightened*

*Revel.* 2.  
21.

*Verf.* 22.  
23.

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(being in these few Instances sufficiently cleared) I shall onely render you the reason of it, and then come to apply it.

Reas. I.

Job 14.

14.

It is a controuling of Gods Wisdom, who layes out for us the fittest season; He is the *Disposer of times*, and hath appointed them (as Job speaks of this Life, *all the dayes of my appointed time*). But this choyce of God for us we sleight, and think he hath not given us a due and fitting portion of time; we will choose for our selves.

Rom. 2. 4.

Act. 13. 41.

Prov. 15. 5.

Prov. 5. 30.

1 Thes. 5.

20.

Secondly, The greater the mercy is, the greater is the sin in the contempt of it; To neglect the time afforded for our good, is a despising of the *Riches of Gods goodnesse and mercy* (saith the Apostle): we are said to despise a thing, not onely when we set it at nought, and make leight account thereof, as, *Acts 13. 41. Behold, you despisers, and wonder*; But likewise, when we neglect to make the good use thereof, which we ought; So Children that follow not their Parents Counsel, are said to despise it. So the leight regarding, and carelesse hearing of the word, is a despising of it, *Prov. 1. 30. 1 Thes. 5. 20.* And so in this Case, we despise the Riches of Gods mercy, when we make not the right use of his patience, and long-sufferance in being led thereby unto repentance. And how provoking a sin that is, I shall hereafter shew you; but for the present leave it to your selves to consider of. And now let us put what hath bin said to some Use.

Use 1.

By this it may appear, that long-life is not alwayes a blessing; it may be given for the hurt of the owner: To the wicked it is not a blessing, through their own default; it may be prolonged and continued to fill up the measure of their sin, as in the next verse shall be shewed.

Use 2.

If this be such an aggravating Circumstance of the sin of sterility and barrennesse, in not bearing and bringing forth fruits meet for Repentance and new Obedience; then it makes exceedingly against this sinful Land in general, and many of us living within the pale of the Church in special.

Jer. 13. 27.

What Nation under Heaven hath God come so near unto in mercy, (in this respect) as he hath to us! What a long *Jubilee*, hath this land enjoyed? how long hath God waited, expecting our amendment, saying, (as, *Jer. 13. last*), When shall it once be? Not onely three years, but threescore, yea, fourscore years



years and upwards, have we enjoyed *Halcyon* dayes, to the admiration of all other Nations of the World. Under the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth* we had a flourishing Land and Church, for the space of 44 years and 4 months: Under the Reign of King *James* 22 years the Church of *England* flourished: Under the Reign of King *Charles* almost 23 years 11 months, till a Cloud overcast our Sun: All which time we have had our standing and yet do remain in his Vineyard a growing Figg-Tree; but whether this fourth year be the year of reprieve, God only knows; but we have cause to fear it, for *the time of fruit is not yet*: We read, *Acts* 9. 31. that when the Church had a little rest throughout *Judea*, and *Galilee*, and *Samaria*, they were edified, and, walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they were multiplied. But hath it bin so with us? Indeed the long time of peace enjoyed hath bin an edifying time, we have improved it to edifying and building, never so much in any Age within such a space of time; but what edifications have we reared? Surely sieled Houses for our selves, glorious Structures, goodly Fabricks, for the credit of our Worship, which we have Built by the strength of our Purfes; as *Nebuchadnezzar* did great *Babylon* by the might of his Power, and for the honour of his Majesty. Every City, Town, Village, is graced with such; but the House of God lyes wast, the inward Temple of our souls is not kept in good reparation. It is like a Lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers, like a besieged City, *Isa.* 1. 8.

*Acts* 9. 31

*Isa.* 1. 8.

But I shall come somewhat closer, and with *Athanasius* and *Theophylact*, apply these three years to the three Ages of man; Youth, Manhood, and Old Age, and endeavour to give you a taste of the Fruit that is produced by us, in each of these Years or Ages, which being done, I hope we shall be convinced of much guilt that lyes upon us, by reason of our neglect of the time allotted us for Fruit.

As for our *Infancy* and *Childhood* spent in misery and folly, and rattled away in toys and fooleries, as the Apostle intimates, *1 Cor.* 13. 11. I shall not speak of that; there is permitted to Childhood, that Childishnesse which without violence to nature, and the God thereof, cannot be driven from it: and I may say of this Age, as the Apostle doth in another Case to the men

*1 Cor.* 13. 11.

Act. 17. 30.

Prov. 22. 6.

Isa. 28. 9.

Deut. 6. 6,

7.

Prov. 22. 6.

Ezek. 4. 14.

Math. 21.

15.

2 Tim. 3.

15.

Prov. 20.

11.

Isa. 7. 15.

Psal. 34.

11.

1 Joh. 3. 7,

18, &amp; 4. 4.

1 Joh. 5. 21.

1 Sam. 21.

1.

Psal. 119.

9.

Eccles. 12.

1.

1 Tim. 4.

12, 13, 14.

Tit. 2. 6.

1 Sam. 1.

18, &amp; 3.

10.

2 King. 22.

2.

1 King. 18.

3, 12.

Dan. 1. 4.

2 Tim. 1. 5.

Psal. 78. 63

Jer. 11. 22,

&amp; 18, 21,

&amp; 50, 30.

of *Athens*, Acts 17. 30. *The time of Childhood God winketh at:* Not as if God were altogether regardlesse of that Age, for he expects that the seed of grace should be then sown in the hearts and minds of Children, even so soon as they be able to receive it; and are capable of it, as appears by that speech of the Prophet *Esay*, 28. 9. and by Precept, *Deut.* 6, 6, 7. *Prov.* 22. 6. and by practise of those that have feared God, *Ezek.* 4. 14. *Math.* 21. 15. *2 Tim.* 3. 15. And a great guesse may be made how our Children will prove when they grow in years, by their dispositions when they are young, *Prov.* 20. 11. *Even a Childe is known by his doing, whether his work be pure, or whether it be right:* As young plants declare by their growing and budding, what Trees they are like to prove, and what Fruit they will bear hereafter. Let a Child be deformed when it is young, there is little hope it will be well-favoured in Age; And experience hath often proved in a number of lewd men, our English Proverb to be true, *Soon it pricks, that Thorne will be:* But being attained to riper years, so as to know the right hand from the left, what is good, and what is evil, to choose the one, and refuse the other; then God comes and looks for Fruit at our hand. As appears not only by his gracious Invitations, *Psal.* 34. 11. *Come you Children, &c.* *1 John* 3. 7, 18, & 4. 4. *1 John* 5. 21. *my little Children, &c.* These were not such Children as hung upon the Breasts, or were new weaned from them; but such, as were *David's* followers, spoken of, whom the Priest asked him, *An vasa puerorum sancta*, *1 Sam.* 21. 4. whether those Children or (as we render the words) if the young Men have kept themselves from Women: likewise the Heavenly Rules and Directions which God gives to youth, shews what he expects from them, *Psal.* 119. 9. *Eccles.* 12. 1. *1 Tim.* 4. 12, 13, 14, 15. *Tit.* 2. 6. and the high praise and honour that God hath put upon such Trees, as have bin fruitful in this Age (as on *Samuel*, *1 Sam.* 2. 18, & 3. 10. *Josiah*, *2 Kings* 22. 2. *Obadiah*, *1 Kings* 18. 3, 12. *Daniel*, 1. 4. *Timothy*, *2 Tim.* 1. 5. with others) whom Scripture makes a very honourable mention of, for that, being young, yet they were Religious; And Lastly, by the Judgments that God hath inflicted, and curses denounced upon this Age, for not being fruitful, *Psal.* 78. 63. *Jer.* 11. 22, & 18,



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♣ 18, 21, ♣ 50, 30. *Lament.* 1. 15, 18, ♣ 2, 21, ♣ 5, 13. *Amos* 4. 10. Many Instances might be produced of such as God hath cut off in the flowre of their youth for their unfruitfulness, (as *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *Hophni* and *Phineas*, *Ammon* and *Absolom*; By all which it is evident, that God expects Fruit in this Age of Youth; yet we are generally possessed with a conceit that Youth is exempted and priviledged by their age, to commit sin with greedinesse, and without controulment; and that he who calls on youth to be godly and gracious, comes to torment them before their time.

*Fly the Lusts of youth* (saith the Apostle *Paul* to *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 22.) Now the Lusts of youth are *Pride* and *Rashnesse*, *Pleasure* and *Wantonness*, contempt of Superiors, and such like. And these are the Fruits wherewith the Boughs and Branches of our Figg-Trees in youth are loaden; so that God may say of the youth of *England*, as he sometimes spake of the youth of *Israel*, *The Lord doth take no joy in our young men*, *Isa.* 9. 17.

You that are of this year's standing, deceive not your selves, nor suffer your selves to be deceived by the Devils suggestions, nor the temptations of others; *Sathan* doth most violently seek to seduce your youth, and to corrupt it; he hath a speciall spite at youth to poyson it; he sucks after young and sweet blood especially, hoping that God will never take his leavings; nor marry that Strumpet which he hath oftentimes defiled: Indeed, what man of Chastity will marry that person that hath lived a Harlot in her youth; and can we think that God will? Wherefore arm thy self in this Age of thy Life, against discouragements of early and timely holinesse: Deth *Sathan*, or thine own false heart suggest unto thee, that God expects not Fruit from thee in this Age, and that thou mayest be too forward; soon ripe, soon rotten; young Saints, old Devils; ♣ ♣ Oppose thou the Lords good will and pleasure against these temptations, He requireth the first-born for his; the first of our Flocks, the first of our Fruits; to teach us to whom the first of our Selves doth of right appertain: And if the first abilities of Soul & Body are to be employed in His service, Is it fit to spend them in the service of *Sathan*? Will a Prince accept of a Book for a Present, that hath the beginning of it rent and torne? And

shall

*Lament.* 1.  
15, 18, &  
2, 21, & 5,  
13.  
*Amot* 4. 10.

2 *Tim.* 2.  
22.  
1 *Tim.* 3. 6.  
*Job* 32. 7.

*Isa.* 3. 5.

*Isa.* 9. 17.

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shall God accept of thee and thy service, if thou neglectest to serve Him in thy youth? Besides, thy youth must be devoted, and bestowed on some, (either God or the Devil) and Who hath most right to it? Is it fit that God should be fed with the Devils reversions, and accept of dry bones, when the Devil hath sucked the marrow out? And doth not experience teach thee, that if the Fruit be nipped in the Spring, there is little hope of any in Autumn; and if young Saints prove old Devils, yet it oftener falls out on the contrary, that young Devils seldom prove old Saints, but old Beelzebubs.

Yet again, the Devil may suggest, That in riper years when you grow more stayed, and better know what you do; it is then more seasonable to think of being Religious and of bearing Fruit. If so, then answer him thus.

First, This is a controuling of God's Wisom, who expects that Youth should be Fruitful.

Math. 20.  
1, 2, 3.

Secondly, That none can assure thee of thy standing another year in the Vineyard: Look as the Labourers were sent into the Vineyard, so they go out; that is, at all heures. Some dye in youth, as in the third hour; some at thirty, and some at fifty, as in the sixth and ninth hours; and some very Old, as in the last hour of the Day; but who can promise his head, that it shall have a snowy haire? how many dye in youth, in comparison of one that lives to old age; Although some Fruit fall from the Tree by a full and natural ripeness, yet all doth not so: more are pulled from it, or wither upon it, by nipping frosts, or are beaten down whilst they are green, than hang on till it be mel-low.

Thirdly, Say thou shouldst live to perfect age, or till thy haire grow gray, Art thou sure that then thou shalt be bearing the Fruits of Piety and Holiness? Is it not usual with God to punish a lustful and wretched youth, with a dotish age?

Psal. 25. 7.

Fourthly, Say that God, in the riches of his grace and mercy, should vouchsafe thee Repentance in after-Age; yet know, that it will prove a corrasive to thy heart to remember how thou hast spent thy youth in vanity and lust; and how great dishonour thou hast brought God's name thereby: *David* prayed God to *forgive the sins of his youth*, nor without a bitter sense and sting of



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of them: *Psal.* 25. 7. *Ephraim* was ashamed and confounded, because he did bear the *Reproach of his Youth*, *Jer.* 31. 19. Take these things into consideration, you that are young and in the flour of your age, let them lodge in your hearts, and make good use of your time; that God may be honoured by you, and you honoured of him for your Fruitfulness: otherwise thou hast cause to fear, that he will one day say unto thee, let him that had thy Youth, take likewise thine Age; let him that had thy beginning, take the end likewise.

The second year of his coming to seek for Fruit, is in our *middle age*, or perfect Man-age, (suppose it be from 25 to 40 years or thereabout,) God expects more from you that are of this age, then from the former; because you are of a longer standing, and have attained the highest degree of perfection in the temper of your bodies. *I write unto you young men* (saith *St. John*) *because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.* The glory indeed of young men is their strength (saith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 20. 29.) The Hebrew word there rendred *young men*, signifieth *choyse men for military employments*: Strength is for *Warr*, said *Rabshakeh*, *Isa.* 36. 5. In regard of your strength, you are most fit for the spiritual combat; nor can you better shew your valour then by resisting of the evil one, and fighting against the *lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and pride of life* (whereof *St. John* speaketh): You are the chief Champions, either for good or evil: If your strength be spent in the practices of Piety and Religion, such works are the more excellent, because they are performed with the more Courage, Zeal, Strength, and Resolution: But if you powre out your strength unto any vice, your Actions become so much the more sinful and outrageous; In this year of your age God comes to you, and you see what is expected from you, even those Fruits mentioned by the Apostle, *1 Tim.* 4. 12, 13. And, *Tit.* 2. 4, 5, 6. But doth God find these Fruits in us in this our Man-age? may we not say, as the Prophet *Esay* in another Case, *I have spent my strength for nought*, *Isa.* 49. 4. Many may so say, and confesse it truly: Some shew their strength in drinking Wine, and bearing Drink, against whom a *wo* is denounced, *Isa.* 5. 22. Some spend their strength in Whoredome, and upon their filthy lusts, dissuaded from,

*Jer.* 31. 19.

*Joh.* 2. 14.

*Prov.* 20. 29.

*Isa.* 36. 5.

*1 Joh.* 2. 16.

*1 Tim.* 4. 12, 13.  
*Tit.* 2. 4, 5, 6.  
*Isa.* 49. 4.

*Isa.* 5. 22.

Prov. 31. 3.  
Hof. 4. 11.  
Prov. 22.  
23.

Jof. 2. 15.

Gen. 38.  
25.

Luk. 1. 80.  
Luk. 2. 52.

Job 32. 7.  
Pfal. 92.  
12.  
Tit. 2. 2.

Eraf. in  
Morie En-  
com.

from, *Prov. 31. 3.* A Vice that enfeeble's strength, and weaken's the powers and faculties of the mind, *Hof. 4. 11.* and consumes the estate, *Prov. 7. 22, 23.* Strength of Body and strength of Purſe (for ſo much doth the Original word tranſlated ſtrength in that place ſignifie) are both conſumed by that ſin, as we find in *Sampſon* and the *Prodigal*: yea, it takes away the ſtrength of a Nation too. The walls of a City are the ſtrength of a City, and *Rahab* the Harlot dwelt upon the walls of *Jericho*, *I hamar* had *Judah's* Staffe and Signet, ſo the Harlot goes away with a mans ſtrength and credit: or if the ſtrength of this age be not ſpent on ſuch luſts of the fleſh, yet the luſts of the eyes, and pride of life goeth away with it, they weary themſelves with carking cares, how to become great in this World; and toyleſome labours how to get the wealth of it, forbearing no ſinful and unjuſt courſe of deceit and fraud how to attain their ends.

It is ſaid of *John Baptist* that he grew and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, *Luke 1. 80.* and of our Saviour that he encreaſed in Wiſdom and Stature, and in favour with God and Man, *Luke 2. 52.* But we grow not ſo faſt in years as vices; our ſins encreaſe faſter then our dayes: In the firſt age, the time of Figgs is not yet come with us, that is put off till another year, till old age come, then men intend to mind Heaven.

And when that is come, and that in this third year God comes for Fruit, doth he find it then? This indeed is eſteemed to be the age of Wiſdom; the Spring hath Pleaſures but the Autumne Profits; the Fruits of Age are much better then the Flowres of Youth: *Multitude of years* (ſaith *Elihu*) *ſhould teach Wiſdom*, *Job 32. 7.* And Trees of God's planting bear moſt Fruit in their old age, (as *David* ſhewes, *Pſal. 92. 12.*) And what the Fruits of this age are, or at leaſt ſhould be, *St. Paul* ſpecifies, *Tit. 2. 2.* *Sobriety, Gravity, Temperance, Soundneſſe in Faith, in Patience, and in Charity*; theſe and ſuch like are the Fruits that God expects the third year from every Tree of that ſtanding. But are theſe Figgs growing on Trees of that age and ſtanding? Surely very rarely; It may be ſaid of the *Engliſh*, as *Erasmus* ſpake of the *Flemmings*, that *Quò magis ſeneſcunt, eò magis ſtulteſcunt*; the Elder the fooliſher; Are not many old men as intemperate as any other? as wanton, as worldly, as ignorant,



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ignorant, as uncharitable, as impatient as any of the younger sort. Nay, some of these Vices are more incident to this age than to the other. *Gray haire is the Crown of old age* (as Solomon shews, *Prov. 20. 29.*) but it is to be understood with that *Proviso*, that *they be found in the wayes of Righteousnesse*, *Prov. 16. 31.* Age is venerable, not for number of years, but for desert: An Elementary old man (as one doth phrase it), having no other Argument of old age but his gray haire and wrinkled forehead, is a most contemptible and ridiculous Creature. These are the signes of wisdom and promise it; but if wisdom be wanning, and no Wine within, it is a folly to have the Bush hang forth.

*Dionysius*, disrobing *Apollo* of his golden Cloak, said, *Nec astate nec hyemi vestis hac convenit*; So do many (saith *Ambrose*) play with God, and deceive their own souls in the businesse of Repentance; or, As the Philosopher said of marriage In youth I was too young, in middle age I had other businesse, and now I am too old to mind it: So say some old men, who think it as much too late to become godly, as young men think it too soone.

Oh! That we should live to this age, and yet be now to learn to become godly; and yet, which is worst of all, to think our selves too old to be taught; that when we perceive our faces and eyes look drooping to the Earth, yet our spirits are never a whit the more lifted up to Heaven; that when every man can see, and say that we are spent and come even to a period of our dayes, yet no man can say that we are come to the beginnings of grace. Such as are aged and godly, God seems to boast of, *Acts 21. 16.* these resemble the *Antient of daies*, but to be old and vicious, these resemble the *old Serpent*: our gray haire make our sins to be the blacker, and powre contempt upon us. See then you whoe *Allmond Trees* do bloom, that you bear better Fruit then such as doth preface the boyling-Pot, *Jer. 11. 13.* If God comes (as come He will) and that very quickly, and finds no Fruit, or no better Fruit then generally this Age bears, it will be very sad with you; You will have cause to curse the time, that ever it was said, *a man child is come into the world*. It is high time for such to look about them: Old age is the Winter

*Prov. 20.*

*29.*

*Prov. 16.*

*31.*

*A. 21. 16.*

*Dan. 7. 9.*

*Rev. 12. 9.*

*Jer. 11.*

*Rev. 22.*

*12. 20.*

*Jer. 20.*

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of our life; No Spring to be expected, but that of the Resurrection, which shall be to Salvation or Damnation. And yet who to old but hopes for longer life? No Stake so old (we say) but may stand one year longer in the hedge; True, but yet ere Winter be over it may be pluckt up, and cast into the fire. Thus I have shewed you what the three years or ages of man's life produceth; these three years many of us have stood in the Vineyard of the Lord, and yet the time of Fruit is not yet come: how can we answer it?

I might come a little nearer home, and apply it to this Place, Parish, Congregation; and every particular soul within the hearing, but I hasten to a second Use.

Use 2.

Which is to exhort you all, both one and other of all Ages to make better use of your time then formerly; the very best stand in need of this Exhortation. Think that Voyce of God spoken to you all: It is sufficient that we have spent the time past after the lusts of the flesh, 1 *Pet.* 4. 2, 3. and thereupon make good use of the time remaining, that you may become Fruitful, that God may find some Figgs under the leaves of your Profession, lest it encrease your condemnation.

I might say much, and use many Motives, that this Exhortation may take with you, and become effectuell; Indeed, all that can be said is little enough; nay, not enough, unlesse God be pleased to accompany it with his blessing. Some considerations I shall commend unto you, and leave the successe to God.

First, Consider the *worth of Time*. Many things are far fetcht, and dear bought, fit for rich Pursets and curious Palates; but there is a poor contemptible herb in the Garden, *Time*, more precious then all; this we passe by with neglect, which is especially worth our gathering.

Time, in it self considered as it is God's Creature, is more precious then Gold: Some Philosophers have defined it to be *Eternity limited*; It is the onely measure, out of which God powres out all his gracious administrations; and for the continuance whereof he keeps all the Celestial Orbs at continual work, daylie and hourly; It is a most precious Cabiner (albeit in it self empty) and made to contain in it the most precious Jewel that



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that ever the World had, *Gal. 4.4.* Every moment of time brings some blessing or other with it: *Thou crownest the year with goodnesse* (saith *David, Psal. 65. 11.*) It brings Heaven and happiness with it, to such as will accept it; In which regard (saith one) every Minute of It is as much as Heaven is worth; for that Heaven and our Souls Salvation lies upon the well using and improving of it; Nor is all the wealth in the World able to purchase one hour's time when Death and Judgment come, nor to recover one hour's losse. Other things may be recovered and fetcht back again; If we have embezzelled our estate by ill Husbandry, we may repaire it by thrift and industry; If we have mortgaged our Lands, the Mortgage may be satisfied, and the Land restored; if we have pawned our Plate or Household stuff they may be redeemed; Health lost, may be recovered; Jewels lost, may be found, albeit cast into the Sea (as *Polycrates* his Ring was, which a fish, bought in the Market, brought back again into his Kitchen.) Yea God's favour and loving countenance lost, may be regained (if sought in Time;) but Time it self being lost, cannot be recovered at any hand: Of it, we may say as one doth of Virginity; Jewels once lost are found again, this never: It's lost but once, and once lost, lost for ever.

Let it be secondly considered by you, how *short the time is* that is allotted to you for the bringing forth of Fruit; for albeit it be sufficient for the performance of special and commendable Actions (in case the whole be employed), yet it is but the time of Life at longest; and what is that but a day, and that not a natural, but an artificial day, consisting of 12 hours. *John 11. 9.* Indeed a thousand years with God are but as a day; the eldest man that ever lived, lived not out that day; we live but an hour of that day they lived: Of a thousand years, *Adam* lived 930, and left but 70 for us, which is but the twelfth part, one hour of that day; Yet none may reckon upon the whole twelve hours; our Sun may set at Noon, nor one of a thousand fullfills his natural course, and runs through all the hours of that Day: To speak as the truth is, we live but a minute of an hour; no more time can we make reckoning of, but the very *totum*, the very instant time and moment that we now live, which is but a point, like too lines laid acrosse, which touch but in one place. Time pass, and

*Gal. 4.4.*

*Psal. 65. 11.*

*John 11. 9. 2 Pet. 3. 8.*

*Amos 8. 9.*

*Punctum est quod vivimus, et punctio minus.*

time to come, toucheth not; only that minute we live touche b; and none of us have any more then one minute at once given to us, which is gone whilst I have bin speaking of it, and another hath succeeded it; which is to be esteemed ours. Time is but a succession of minutes one after another, and being so short, need there is to make good use of it, and this is the Argument S. Paul useth, 1 Cor. 7. 29. to improve our Time.

1 Cor. 7.  
29.

*Ex hoc mo-  
mento pen-  
det Eterni-  
tas Aug.*

*Omnia a-  
lien a sunt,  
tempus tan-  
tum no-  
strum.  
Neh. 5. 3.*

*Nulla  
Dies sine  
linā, Apol-  
les. Plin. l.  
35. c. 12.*

Gen. 25. 8,  
& 35. 29.  
Job 42. 27.  
2 Chron.  
14. 25.  
1 Chron.  
23. 1.  
Act. 13. 36,  
& 20. 24.

Thirdly, The Importance and weightinesse of the Work we have to do, may be another strong motive to make good use of the time allotted to us for the doing of it; for albeit it be but a moment, yet *Eternity depends upon it*; yea, a double Eternity, eternal happinesse, or eternal misery; We use to count our Time more, or lesse precious, according as the businesse we have to do, is of more or lesse concernment; Now, Is any thing of greater consequence then the obtaining of Heaven, and the Salvation of these poor souls of ours? Time is the chiefeft and principal part of that Stock which God hath put into our hands to trade for Heaven with. Nothing but time is properly Ours, and to lose that, is to lose all our Stock at once: So the answer that *Nehemiah* gave to his Enemies (who under pretence of a parley with him, would have hindered the work he was about) we shoud give to the World, Flesh and Devil, which seek to make us waste our time; *I am doing of a great Work* it concerns my Salvation, *so that I cannot come. Why should the Work cease whilst I leave it and come to you*, Neh. 4. 3? The Work being of so great weight, no day should passe without drawing some lines.

Fourthly, Consider *how long we have loytered*, and cast our selves behind hand; much of this little time allowed for to great a Work is already past, and wasted unprofitably. It is often said of the godly in Scripture, that they dyed *full of dayes*; and that not onely in regard of length of time, so that they lived so long as themselves desired; But for that they had *filled the will of God*, and improved their time well, and done that for which they were sent into the World, *Acts 13. 36, & 20. 24*. Now if it be so said of them in that respect, then on the contrary it must be said of the wicked, that their dayes which they live, are *empty dayes and voyd*. So *Carthusianus* expoun-



expounding those words of *Job*, *Empty months*, or *months of vanity*, I have reckoned to my self, tellen us, that every Penitent sinner may very well say, that he hath wasted, consumed, and spent his time and dayes without Fruit and Profit. Should we call to mind how long we have lived, and how little good we have done; how much of our time hath bin spent in superfluous Sleeping, Eating, Drinking, (more then Nature requires,) in in proud dressing the Body, Tatling, Sporting, and things unprofitable, (which might as well have bin left undone as done); or if we call to mind how much of our time hath bin spent in sinful actions, which ought not to be done; we must needs confesse the greatest part of our life is consumed in *Vanity*, and that our *days have bin empty*; and it should provoke us to a careful employing of what time remaines, as did that Prince *Mycernius*, who being told that he should live but six years longer, (take what course he would) answered, that he would then make those six years twelve, and he knew how to do it, which was by forbearing his wonted sleep and recreations, by setting up Lights every night, which burned continually; by reading and studying, &c. This is the way to *live much* in a *short time*.

Fifthly, The time that remaines of our life is *very swift and uncertain*. By three *Adverbs*, Time is ordinarily expressed in Scripture, *Nunc*, *Tunc*, *Olim*: *Nunc* is only good debt that we can reckon upon: *Tunc* is uncertain, *Olim* is desperate: Now as Merchants use to divide their debts, some are doubtful, some desperate, some certain; so may we divide the time of Life: *Time past* not well spent, is but a *Desperate Debt*; *Time to come* is doubtful, therefore the Prophet speaks of it with an *If*. *Psal. 90. 10. If a man lives till he be fourscore*, that is, suppose it be so: The *present time of life* is the only *certain time*, and that flies away full swiftly. We are carryed to our journey's end in the Chariot of Time, and we measure Time usually by the motion of the Sun when it hath gone an entire round, from the East unto the West (that makes a natural day). When we look upon a *Sun-Dial* that discovers the motion of it, every hour of the day (whilst it is in our Horizon) it seemeth to us to pace very slowly, (or to stand still rather); for whilst we look upon the Diall we cannot perceive the Sun to move, (albeit it runs many thousands of miles

*Job 7. 3.*

*Magna pars vite nobis perit dum nihil agimus, multo maxima pars vite dum inutilia agimus. Senec.*

*Psal. 90. 10*

miles every minute, no arrow can fly so swiftly, nor bullet with such speed as the Sun goes; could a Bird (say some) fly round about the compasse of the Earth in a minute of an hour, yet the Sun exceeds that Bird in swiftnesse. Sure it is, that however we cannot perceive by steady looking on a Dial, how swiftly the Sun passeth, yet we may easily gather that the Sun standeth not still, by the shadow that passeth from hour to hour; and, by its running over all the figures from the Rising of the Sun to the Setting of it, we may conclude, that it is of an incredible swiftnesse: Thus doth thy life passe swiftly, albeit the motion be insensible to thee: thou discernest not whilst it is going; but in a short time thou shalt find that thy life is so far spent, that it is near unto a period, ere thou be aware: *My dayes are swifter then a Post* (saith Job.) *they fly away; they see no good, they are passed away as swift Ships, as the Eagle that hasteth to the prey,* Job 9. 25, 26. where the gradation is well observed by some. It is likened to a *Post* that makes haste, yet sometimes staves by the way: And then to a *Pyrates Pinnace*, which with great swiftnesse makes after the Prey; yet that underlayle may be becalmed; And then to an *Eagle* which flies through the Aire, but leaves no mention of her passage; the noyse of her wings may be heard, but no token of her way can be found: Such is the life of man.

Job 9. 25,  
26.

Rev. 10. 6.

Sixthly, Consider that *time is irrecoverable*; When this time of Life is ended, Time (with thee) shall be no more: There is then no more work to be done, whereby it is possible for thee to further or procure the Salvation of thy Soul; If grace and mercy be not obtained within the compasse of Time, it can never be had; when the *Tree is cut down*, it cannot be expected that any more fruit will ever grow upon it. *As the Tree falls* (saith Solomon) *so it lyes*; if it falls fruitlesse, it shall lye fruitlesse; and as Death leaves thee, so will Judgment find thee: Oh! what would the damned give (think you) to be now again upon the Earth in the Land of the Living? how many dayes would they willingly spend, and that in the most hard and difficult services, that they might enjoy but one Year more; Nay, one Month, one Week, one Day's times of standing, as they did, in God's Vineyard? Might Time be carryed to Hell to be sold (saith

Eccles. 11.  
3.

Benardinus)



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*Bernardus de Sena*) a thousand Worlds would be given for one hours time, if they had them to give. Should God ask them, would you be content to ly in fetters a hundred years in the darkest Dungeon on Earth, and there be fed with bread and water? Would you be content to be put to the Rack, and suffer the most exquisite torments that ever any suffered in the World; if you might enjoy on day one Earth, or one hour's time; so that by the well improving of it you might be within compasse of mercy? How readily would they answer, That or any thing else, Lord, that thou wilt impose, so that we might but enjoy it: And wilt thou be so foolish, as now, having life continued, carelessly to waste this time, which being past is irrecoverable?

Seventhly, Consider how *God in his just Judgment cutteth off sinners*, from enjoying the benefit of Time, who make no reckoning of it to profit themselves thereby, as they ought and might have done; according as we find it threatned, *Psal. 55. Job 15. 32, 33, & 22, 16, & 36, 14.* The meaning is, that they shall be cut off before they have attained to that age which they might have attained unto, had they improved their time as they might have done, and ought to have done; *David* was afraid of this, and deprecated it, *Psal. 102. 24. Take me not away in the midst of my dayes*; As if he should have said, Lord I fear, that for ill imploying of my time, my life shall be cut off and shortened, according as thou hast threatned in Judgment, to inflict upon those who spend their time in wickednesse, not regarding the worth of time, which thou affoordest them for their good. I have read of a terrible and fearful accident which happened in a certain Village, near to the Kingdom of *Valentia*, which, however it may seem incredible to us; yet having so good and learned an Authour for it, I shall relate it to you: A young man of 18 years old, having bin a very rebellious and disobedient Child, and falling into many flagitious courses, becoming at last a notorious Thief, was apprehended, and (after due proceeding) was condemned to be hanged in the open Market-place; which sentence was accordingly executed on him. The young man being dead, and still hanging on the Gallows, most of the Town being present, they perceived his beard to sprout out, and much gray haire to grow, and his face suddenly to wax wrinkled and withered,

*Psal. 55.*

23.

*Job 15. 32,*

*33, & 22,*

*16, & 36,*

*14.*

*Psal. 102.*

24.

*Bernard.*

*Tom. 2.*

*Quadrang.*

*2. Dom.*

*Quadrang.*

*Ser. 17.*

*See here a story of a young man most wonderful*

withered, so that he seemed to the Company to be as one of ninety years of age: This accident the Bishop was acquainted withall (who then resided in that Village): he calling the People together, humbly besought God that he would be pleased to reveal unto them the mystery and meaning of so rare an Accident; which being done he said thus unto the People; You see, my Sons, that this young man dyed at the age of 18 years, who now appears to you full of gray haire, as if he were one of 90 years of age; and this is that which God would teach you hereby, that, after the course of nature, he was to have attained to the age of Ninety, but for his sins and disobedience, the Lord hath cut off to many of his years as are from 18 to 90; and because this might be made manifest, and apparent to all men, he hath wrought this miracle before your eyes. And this, saith my Authour, was made known to the Bishop by Revelation. O be wary how you abuse the present time of life by living in sin and wickednesse. *Be not over-much wicked (saith Solomon), neither be thou foolish, for why shouldst thou dye before thy time?* that is, be not carelesse of falling into any grosse sin; he that sinneth least, sinneth *overmuch*, but yet the goodness of God is such (saith *Cajetan*) that he thinks not overmuch of it, unlesse our negligence and willfulnesse be such, as that it carries us from sin to sin, into some heynous crime; for that cause will God to cut thee off *before thy time*; or (as some render the words) in a time that is not thine; that is, before thine Old Age, for that is man's time of dying, when the time of living (according to the course of man's nature) is expired: neither feed thy fancy with hopes and promises of time to come, saying, as some do; let me have this day, and God shall have to morrow; For as *Bil-dad* speaks of the wicked, *The snare is layd for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way*; this thou mayest find in thy greatest mirth and jollity; Thou mayest be taken suddenly in the trap, and be enforced to suffer a sudden overthrow.

Eighthly, Shouldst thou be suffered to live long upon the Earth, yet thou must remember that a *strict account must be given to God of all thy Time*; and how thou hast spent it. It is a great Tallent that God will (without question) reckon with us for. The Prophet *Jeremiah* in his Lamentations hath this passage,

*Thou*

Eccles. 7.

17.

Explained.

Cajetan. in  
loc.

Job 18. 10.



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*Thou wilt bring the day that thou hast call'd, and they shall be like unto me*; which words, (however they are properly to be understood of the Enemies of the Church, on whom God would in due time execute those threatnings denounced against them, and then their estates should be as sad as the Churches now was, yet) are expounded by some of the day of Judgment who read the words thus, *Vocavit adversum me Tempus* the Lord called Time, to witnesse against me, and we may make use of that reading. For amongst other things whereof we are to be charged and burthened; one will be Time, and when all Creatures (the Devils not excepted) shall come, and commence their suits against all sortish and senselesse Sinners, accusing them, and requiring Justice against them for the wrong they did, both against the Creator and Creature, by abusing them, mi'applying them, and enforcing them against their wills to serve their luits and brutish appetites; Time shall be one of the principal accusers, and be called to bring in her Evidence: Come Time (will God say) look upon the Prisoner at the Barr; Dost thou know that Man, that Woman? Yea, Lord, very well; I have bin acquainted with them, and served them by thy appointment all their life, for 30, 40, 50, 60 years (more or lesse): Well; speak Time, what canst thou say against them? How hast thou bin used by them? speak truly and freely, &c. Great God, and most Righteous Judge, Thou didst appoint me to attend on them, and to furnish them with opportunities for their souls good; and to call on them to hear, to read, to pray daylie; (besides the seaventh part, reserved to be wholly imployed this way); but I have bin wasted and consumed by them, in serving of their several luits; sometimes I was spent in floggish idlenesse and sortishnesse; Complaint was often made of a want in Me, for the performance of what thou requiredst to be done, when I was mispent and abused: So many years were consumed in vain sports, idle company, superfluous feeding and sleeping, whole nights in playing and gaming, and yet not one hour (all being put together) in a year, that was spent in praying and calling on thy Name; most part of my Service they employed in bunnig after the Wor'd, in vile courtes of prophanesse and filthinesse, and doing mischief, in getting and going to Hell; which had I bin

Lament. 1.  
12.

Bernard.  
Tho. Aquin.  
Sap. 1.

*Soe hear  
How tym  
speaks  
to god  
against  
sinners  
&c*

employed rightly, they might with far lesse trouble have done much good, and attained happinesse and glory; Few hours (nay few minutes) was I employed in seeking thy glory, doing good to others, or working out the Salvation of his Soul; Besides, Lord, this I can further say—. Nay, Time, Thou hast said enough! Now what canst thou say, poor Soul? what wilt thou plead in this case? Why? (it may be thou wilt plead) I have indeed spent my time idly and sinfully; but I expected that time would have continued longer with me, and then I would have improved it better: And will this plea stand thee in any stead? Think I beseech you of the day of reckoning for time mispent, and that in time.

Ninthly and Lastly, Consider what a *stamp both of honour and disgrace* the Holy Ghost puts upon such as use, or use not, the time that God hath allotted for doing of good. Such as have used their time aright; and layd hold of opportunities offered, they are esteemed *wise and understanding men*; Who is as the *wise man* (saith Solomon), Eccles. 8. 1? that is, What Creature under Heaven is so excellent as the wise man is? none to be compared to him, Now who this wise man is, he shews in the words following, and exemplifies it in sundry Points, which require great wisdom: and then determines, vers. 5. *The heart of the wise man discerneth both Time and Judgment*: he discerneth the time when every thing should be done, and the best way how it should be done. This wisdom Moses wished on Israel's behalf, Deut. 32. 19. And prayed for, Psal. 90. 12. And for this were the Sons of *Isachar* highly commended, 1 Chron. 12. 32. *they were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do*: So *Ahasuerus* his Counsellors are styled *wise men*, because *they knew the times*, Esther. 1. 13. that is, they could order things fitly to the times, and that justly according to the Law; and were able to order all businesses and affaires accordingly. And this *St. Paul* (likewise) counts wisdom, as appears by that advice of his, Eph. 5. 15. *Walk Circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise men; redeeming the time, because the dayes are evil*: as if he should have said, If you have once learned to redeem your time in these sinful dayes, you shall shew yourselves to be truly wise, and not fools.

For

Eccles. 2.  
1.—5.  
Explained.

Deut. 32.  
19.  
Psal. 90.  
12.  
1 Chron.  
12. 32.  
Est. 1. 13.

Eph. 5. 15.



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For (on the contrary) such disrespect and scorn doth the Scripture cast on those as want this wisdom, *Folly* is with them that have such a price as Time put into their hands, but have not a heart to make the right use thereof. *How do ye say, We are wise* (saith God to the Jews), (yea, to the learned of them) (by his Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Jer.* 8.8?) That is, how can ye say it for shame; with what face can you speak it? And why so? Surely, for that they were more brutish and ignorant in laying hold on time and opportunity, than meer Animals. *The Scork in the Aire knows her appointed Time*, and the *Turtle*, and the *Crane*, and the *Swallow* observe the time of their coming: but *this People* (saith God) *knows not the Judgment of the Lord*, *vers.* 7. And for ignorance, and neglect of this, our Saviour brands the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* (those learned Doctors of the Law) for Hypocrites, for that they did not *Discern the signes of the Times* *Math.* 16. 1, 2, 3, 4. They could Prognosticate faire or foul weather by the face of the Sky; but they could not by those clear Predictions of the Prophets, and the miraculous demonstration of Christ's Power, discern the time of Christ's coming into the World, who was sent for the salvation of mankind, nor what this time called for at their hands; and therein they shewed themselves no better then a Company of Hypocritical fools; and so he left them: Thus you see how God esteems of the one and other. If then you would shew your selves truly wise, and not have the fools-Capp put upon your heads; make the right use of that time which God affords you for your good: Many more Motives I might bring, that have much weight in them to quicken your dullnesse, and hasten your endeavours in making use of your time: As from the practise of the Heathens; *Titus Vespasian* cryed out *Amici, diem perdidi*, for as much as no man had received benefit by him that day: And from the Practise of worldly men, who watch for all Tides, waite for all Times, Sayl by all Winds, Court all opportunities, and greedily catch, and thirstily use them, to promote their ends; Yea, from the Devil himself, who is busie *because he knowes his time to be short*. But I desire not to say all, that I might say to this Point; but enough and enough hath bin said. If by all that hath bin said, any of you be wrought upon to husband the time of your dan-

Prov. 17.  
16.

Jer. 8. 8.  
*Enlightened.*

Verf. 7.

Math. 16.  
1, 2, 3, 4.

Rev. 12.  
12.

ding in Gods Vineyard, better then heretofore you have done; Remembring that the time of this life is not for the Body but for the Soul, and for Her onely was it assigned and appointed: Let not (then) thy Body bereave thy Soul of that time which belongeth to it, for its welfare; but for thy Soul's good, abridge thy Body rather of what it craves: Should some (speciall friend, or great man come to take up his Quarters in our House, we are content for a time to withdraw into the worst part of it, that he may be well accommodated, Do thou the same, saith Bernard; and be content for the good of thy soul to abate of thy delights & pleasures, ease and sleep; and say unto thy soul as Joseph to Pharaoh's Butler, *Think on me when it shall be well with thee; and I will remember thee if thou now dost this for me*, Gen. 40. 14.

Gen. 40.  
14.

Object.

But, Methinks I hear some objecting against all that hath bin said; We see many living to old age: This Figg-Tree stood the fourth year, and Why may not I, and then become fruitful? None so Old but thinks he may live one year longer; and, then bearing fruit he may be accepted; This Plea stands like the Body of *Ama-sa* whom *Joab* had slain (which the men of *Judah* stood gazing upon) and must be removed before we proceed in our march.

2 Sam. 20.  
12.

Rsp.

If thy hard and impenitent heart suggests such a thought as this, I shall answer thee briefly, and so leave thee to God's mercy.

What thou sayest, is not *impossible*: but that thou, who hast bin long settled upon thy Lees, and yet goest on presumptuously in a course of sinning upon hope of long life, and repenting then, shouldst in thy Old age meet with Repentance, is very *improbable* and unlikely, (albeit we dare not determine any thing): I shall first illustrate this by Comparisons, and then render you the reasons of it.

Nam dico,  
Salvabitur;  
non dico,  
Damnabitur.  
Aug.

The unlikeliness of it may be set out, by these and such like Similitudes: If one after a great Rain cannot go over a running Brook at noon, when the waters are low, will it not be much harder to get over that Brook at night, when all the Streams are come to one course or currene? So will it not be harder (think-est thou) to repent after the committing of a hundred sins then ten? Are not sparks sooner quenched then flames? and green wounds



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wounds sooner healed than festered sores? Is not the Nail that is driven in with the Hammer into a piece of Timber, fastned with many blowes? At the first driving of it we strike but easily, but afterwards we redouble our strength, and with often striking, drive it so home that it cannot be gotten out till the Timber comes to be consumed in the fire. Many the like Similitudes are used to good purpose by Divines, to give you to understand the danger of delaying to bring forth good fruit to God, till old age. But I shall leave Resemblances, and come to the Reasons of it, which are many.

First, In regard of the *habit of sinning*, which through custom & long continuance in sinning, thou wilt get. And a habit is hard left: *Can a Blackmore change his skin, or a Leopard his spots* (saith the Prophet), *then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil?* As if he should have said, Ye are so habituated in evil, that there is no hope at all of your reclaiming: As soon may the Blackmore turn white, or the Leopard spottlesse, as ye turn good after so long and obstinate persistence in your wickedness: Read *Job 20. 11.* there you shall find, that the sins of Youth are hardly left in Age.

Secondly, Whilst we are in our sins, *we are in the power and possession of Satan*; and the longer we inure our selves to sin, the faster hold hath the Devil on us, and the more established and strengthened is his Kingdom in our hearts: He holds his possession with more power and strength, when he can prescribe so many years, or time out of mind; Oh! how hard will it be then to expel him?

Thirdly, The longer we live in sin, the more doth *God withdraw his grace*; and depart the further from us; and without his grace, our conversion will never be effected. He that hath promised forgiveness to the Penitent, hath not promised to give the grace of Repentance to him that defers it. Albeit he hath promised to accept of thee, if thou turn to him to morrow, yet he hath not promised that thou shalt live till to morrow.

Fourthly, Put case thou dost live till old age, and then bring forth the Fruit of a Reformed Life; yet *that time is not so seasonable for Fruit*, in regard it will not be so comfortable to thy self;

*Habitus qui multis actionibus acquiritur, difficillime amittitur.*  
Jer. 12. 23.  
Enlightened  
Job. 20. 11.

*Pœnitenti veniam spondit Deus; sed vivendi in crastinum non spondit.*  
Chrys.

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self; nor so acceptable unto God, as the fruit of the first or second year will be.

When old age falls in travel of Childe-birth, that had bin before Childlesse, there is like to be a hard brunt, and sad banquet of it; So is it in the new birch of old sinners: For old age is that time that *Solomon* speaks of, Eccles. 12. *1. Years, wherein thou wilt say I have no pleasure in them:* And the reason is rendred, *vers. 2.*

—7. It is an age wherein the *Sun, the Light, the Moon, the Starrs* will be darkned in respect of any delight, thou canst take in their sweet shine: Those Creatures which God hath made for the comfort of Man, either by Day or Night, shall be all darkened unto thee; and all comforts, taken in thy younger years, will be turned into discomforts: And the *Clouds* will return after Rain; there will be a continual succession of miseries, (like the weather in *April*); as one shower is unburthened, another is brewed; and thy sky will still be overcast with Clouds: In that day, the keepers of thy house shall tremble; Thy Arms which are the guard of this thy Houle of Clay, and thy Hands which are for thy hodies defence, shall be taken with the Palsey; And thy strong men, thy Thighs and Legs, which like Posts and Pillars bear up thy House (the Body,) those strong supporters shall bow themselves, and sink under thee. And thy Grinders, thy Teeth which like Millstones grinde thy meat, shall fail thee, because they are few, or none; their mortizing will be loosed, their lockers cast them, and those that remain so worne out with daily use, that they will be unserviceable to thee; grinding very slowly and with great difficulty. And those that look out at the Windows; Thine eyes which look out at thy eye-lids, will be darkened, either blind or dim: The Doors will be shut in the Streets when the sound of grinding is low, such will be the weaknesse of Old Age, that it shall affect privacy and retirednesse, not caring to go abroad to feallings and merry-makings; thy slow feeding having made thee unfit for other men's Table: And thou shalt rise up at the Voyce of the Bird; thy sleep shall depart from thine eyes, so that every little noyse, the Crowing of the Cock, the Chirping of a Bird shall awake thee. And all the Daughters of musick shall be brought low; those many parts of the Ears and Instruments of Hearing shall be humbled; The Anvile is worn, the Hammer

Eccles. 12.

1. &c.

Verf. 2.

7.

Explained.



Hammer is weak, the Drum is unbraced, the Aire is grown thick, the Musick is marred; and (with old *Barzillai*) thou wilt take no pleasure in the sweetest melody. *Thou wilt then be afraid of that which is high*; not onely of God (as some understand it) to whom thou art speedy to give an account of thy self; But thy decrepitate Age, shall make thee so unfit to move, that thou shalt not be able to go up any ascent, afraid to ascend a staire; even in plain grounds, thou shalt be afraid of every rubb and clodd that lies in thy way, lest thou stumble at it. Then *thy Almond Tree shall flourish*, the white blossoms of Age shall covet thy head: *And the Grasshopper shall be a burthen to thee*; thy stooping shoulders (which in aged persons stick up and cannot bear a load) shall seem burthensome. *And desire shall fail*, those lusts and strong desires after pleasures which were in former times of thy youth, shall now be gone and past, for that *thou art now going to thy long home*, that is, the grave. And the mourners go about the Streets; thy Neighbours and Friends, or hired Persons prepare all things ready for thy Funeral, and are expecting when they shall follow thy Horse to the place of Burial.

Now, can any imagine that such an Age as this is, is seasonable to begin such a work in, as Repentance is? *Nehemiah* complained of the Jews, that in building of the walls of *Jerusalem*, they laid the heaviest burthen on the oldest men; we are too cruel to our selves in putting off the hardest task to our latter time. Therefore *Solomon* goes on, and presseth this Exhortation to young men; *Before the Silver cord be loosed, or the Golden bowle be broken, or the Pitcher be broken at the Fountain, or the Wheel broken at the Cisterne*; that is, before all our natural and vital Spirits, be utterly exhausted, and all the Functions and Offices of Life be quite discharged, which shall be in the last act of Death; that they would remember God: For as when the Cord is loosed, and the Bucker broken, and the Pitcher broken at the Well, or the Wheel at the Cistern, no water can any more be drawn; So when these Vital parts of ours fail, there can be no longer protraction of Life: We would think him little lesse then mad, that having a great journey to go, and a great load to carry, and having choyce of other lusty Horses, would lay all his

2 Sam. 8.  
35.

Hierom. in  
loc.

B. B. Hall.  
Paraph. in  
loc.

his Carriage upon a poor feeble jade, that could scarce stand upon his legs, or bear himself up, and suffer the other to go empty; yet such is thy folly, who putteth off thy Repentance and amendment of life till thy hairs grow gray.

Besides, It will then be very hard to find out the true ground from whence that Repentance of thine ariseth; and to assure thy self of the Truth of it. That repentance which men take up in time of sicknesse or old age, and trust unto, is rather a meer cessation from sin, then true Repentance; sin leaves them rather than they leave sin; Or else it ariseth from self-love, and not from the love of God; the Soul being then possessed with the fear of Death and Hell, which causeth them to bewail their former mis-spent lives; And if this be the ground thereof, what is there more then nature in thee? When a Beast falls into danger it will struggle to save it self: Nor can the Stream rise higher then the Fountain. Were it out of love which thou bearest to God, that thou now forsakest thy sins, and resolvest to enter upon holy Duties; why was it not done sooner? Proceeded those things from love, when they are soonest done, that man shall greive that they were done no sooner.

And put case that thy Repentance shall then prove true and sound, yet it will not be so *Acceptable unto God*: for as much as he hath not so much honour by the Fruit which we then begin to bear in our Old Age, as he would have by that which we bring forth in Youth. The Repentance of the Thief upon the Crosse, (which is often pleaded, and from whose example so many presume of mercy (and it is a hard case (saith one) when a Thief must guide us, and be an example to us) albeit it was true, and sufficient for the Salvation of his Sou', yet it brought not that glory to God, (setting aside the miracle) which it might have done, had it bin earliyer; nor so much glory to himself. For as he that spends his Patrimony prodigally, hath the lesser portion from his Father in the end; so he who spends his dayes sinfully, must expect the lesser glory from God, if in case he (in the end of his dayes) obtains a pardon.

Wherefore, as you tender the Salvation of your souls, make a due application of these things unto your selves, and consider seriously, whether it will be easier for you to amend, and reform your



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your lives now, or hereafter; now in health, or hereafter in sicknesse; now when the burthen of your sins is lesse, or hereafter when they will be heavier upon your Consciences; now, when grace is near, or hereafter when it shall stand at a farther distance: And take heed, that you add not sin to sin, by your delayes: *Say not to thy Neighbour, Go and come again to morrow* (saith Solomon,) much lesse, say so to thy God, and to his blessed Spirit. God likes it not to be thus put off; he loves not those who have Fruit to seek (as the Foolish Virgins had their Oyl) when he calls for it. *To Day if you will hear my Voyce, harden not your hearts* (saith God, *Psal. 95. 8.*) Let not the cry of that dismal Raven, *Cra, Cra,* To morrow, to morrow, be your note; This was that which *Austin* misliked in himself, and confessed: Why not now Lord? Why not now? Lay hold upon every opportunity offered for thy soules good, and make good use of the acceptable time. *Behold, this is the acceptable time, this is the Day of Salvation,* even whilst God calls upon thee to be fruitful, *1 Cor. 6. 2.* Otherwise take heed lest God deals by thee as *Alexander* dealt by a Souldier of his, whom he found mending of his Arms when all the Battle was in array, and ready to fight; He cashiered him, saying, that he was unworthy of his Service, who was then to provide his Arms when he was to use them. Take heed that God do not casheire thee with contempt and scorn, who neglecting the time, allotted to thee for thy good, thinkest hereafter to amend thy wayes and reform thy evil life. And so much of the first aggravating Circumstance of this Figg Tree's barrennesse; It had stood three years and bore nothing: The next aggravation is from the means it had of fruitfulness, in these words,

Εν τῇ συκῇ, On (this) Figg-Tree.

This Tree which I have thus planted in my own Vineyard, and on which, I have had an eye for many years together; This Figg-Tree which hath bin culured and dressed by my pains and labour; and which I have nourished, visited, spared; This is that Tree on which (notwithstanding all my care and pains) no Fruit is growing. Observe,

To sin against the means addeth weight unto the sin, and is most provoking: The more means we have to make us good, the

K k

greater

Prov. 3. 28.

Math. 25.

Psal. 95. 8.

Aug. Conf. c. 5.

1 Cor. 6. 2.

*Inutilis acie qui paraverat arma tunc, cum iis utendum.*  
Plutarch.

Text.

Doct.

greater is our sin and danger, if we become not good, or profit not thereby.

This People (said *Moses* to the Lord concerning *Israel*) *have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of Gold* Exod. 32.

31.

31. A great sin it was in its own kind and nature; *Idoltery* is a sin that God detests; but it was the greater, being against so many means: A Law had bin delivered unto them not long before, in a most terrible and fearful manner, that they might know how great a God they served, which forbade that sin: *Moses* was gone to the Mount for more; *Aaron* was left with them, to counsel and direct them until *Moses* was returned; yet they call for other gods to go before them back into *Egypt*, Acts 7. 39, 40.

Exod. 19.

& 20, 22.

Acts 7. 39,  
40.

Psal. 78.

Ezek. 16.

Isa. 1, 2,

& 5, 1, 2,

& 65, 2.

Jer. 7. 43,

14.

Dan. 9. 5, 6.

Mich. 6. 3.

2 Sam. 12.

2.

1 King, 11.

9.

2 Chron.

28, 22.

Mat. 11.

21.

Joh. 1.

44.

Luc 4. 31.

Mat. 10.  
13, 14.

You shall often find the sins of that People aggravated from the means that they had, and yet despised, *Psal. 78. Ezek. 16.* that whole Psalm, and that whole Chapter is spent on that subject. So, *Isa. 1, 2, & 5, 2. &c. & 65, 2. Jer. 7. 13, 14 15. Dan. 9. 5, 6. Mich. 6. 3. &c.*

Thus was *David's* sin aggravated, (as *Nathan* shews by a Parable, and enforceth him to confesse as much). So was *Solomon's*, 1 *King. 11. 9.* the Like was King *Ahaz's*, 2 *Chron. 28. 22.* By many examples out of the Old Testament, might we confirme this Truth.

Nor is the New Testament wanting to us, for proof of what hath bin delivered; Hear how Christ upbraydeth and testifieth against those three Cities, *Corazim, Bethsaida, and Capernaum*, for their not profiting by the means, *Matb. 11. 21. Woe to thee Corazim, &c.* These were Cities of *Galilee* where Christ often Preached; and where most of His Works were done: Out of *Bethsaida* He called His first Disciples, *Peter, Andrew* and *Philip*: In *Capernaum* he Preached almost every Sabbath Day, and made them astonished at his Doctrine, *Luke 4. 31.* And because they had all these means, heard all his preaching, and profited not thereby; therefore their case was worse, and their Judgment would be heavier then that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, *Mat. 10. 13, 14. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah at the Day of Judgment then for those who have the means and condemn it:* God can better bear any thing then the abuse of his grace in the free offers of mercy.

Hear



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Hear also what Christ saith of his Countrymen the Jews, *John* 15. 24. *If I had not done the Works amongst them, which no other man did, they had not had sin, but now they have both seen, and hated both me and my Father*; the meaning is, Not that they had bin absolutely free from sin, but Comparative'y without it; they had not stood guilty of so heinous a sin as now they do, in condemning both me, and my Father that sent me: And this may be farther confirmed by that passionate and patherical Complaint which Christ made over *Jerusalem*, *Mat.* 23. 37, 38. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, — how often would I have gathered thee under my wings?* And the soare punishment, inflicted on them for this their sin, shews the heinousness thereof, for He never punisheth any, *Ultra Condignum*. Now the soarest Judgments have bin inflicted on those that have despised the means of grace here in this life, and will be in the life to come.

Take with you one or two more Particular instances. Of *Judas*, our Saviour saith thus to *Pilate*, *He that delivered me into thy hand, hath the greater sin*: Treason is a sin odious enough, but his was the greater, for that he had received so many favours from Christ; he was called to be one of his Disciples and Followers, had seen his miracles, heard his sweet and blessed Sermons, was made his Treasurer and Purse-bearer; Now to betray such a Master must needs aggravate his Sin, and make it the more loathsome.

I shall further instance in *Herod*, who, in putting *John* into Prison, committed a sin more fowl than either Adultery or than Incest, *Luke* 3, 19, 20. that was added above all, that is, above all his other evils which he was guilty of, (and they were more than a few) this was a sin above the rest; more hateful to God, and odious in his eyes in condemning the grace of the Gospel; and offering Violence to the Messengers of it, especially to them that we have got some good by, (as *Herod* had done by *John*). Enough hath bin said for confirmation of the Point, I will briefly lay down some Grounds or Reasons of it, and so put it to some Use.

Sins of this nature are accompanied with horrible ingratitude against the God of Heaven; His mercy is undervalued, and esteemed as of no worth; His favour is despised, and God

*John* 15.  
24.  
*Enlightened*

*Mat.* 23.  
37, 38.

*John* 19.  
11.

*Luke* 3.  
19, 20.

*Reas.*

Psal. 35.

12.

Deut. 32.

6.

Joh. 10. 32.

Joh. 5. 40.

Mat. 23.

37.

Job 34. 27.

1 Sam. 15.

23.

Math. 27.

60.

2 Sam. 12.

11.

Joh 15. 22.

Rom. 10.

18, 19.

Luke 12.

48.

Gen. 42.

21.

Amos 3. 2.

Luke 12.

48.

more dishonoured then by the sins of simple ignorance. Now unkindnesse from them of whom we have well deserved is the more grievous: Man complains of this, (so did *David*, *Psal.* 35. 12. and God complains of this, *Deut.* 32. 6. So did Christ, *for which of my good Works do ye stone me?* *Joh.* 10. 32, (of which sin we have spoke largely before).

Secondly, The more of the will is in any thing, the more is in the well or ill doing of it; now in sinning against the means, there is much of the will in it, and so the more contempt and obstinacy, yea, rebellion against God therein, *He added rebellion to his sin*, *Job* 34. 37. Now rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, as *Samuel* told *Saul*, *1 Sam.* 15. 23. (and of *Witches* we cry out, To the fire with them, burn them). The more willful any one is in sinning, the more vile and sinful he must needs be. Every sin rolles the stone to the door of the Sepulchre, but willfulnesse and obstinacy is like the sealing up of that stone before rolled, *Math.* 27. vers. 66. It makes our sins as reproachful as *Abso-lom's*, who committed wickedness in the face of the Sun, *2 Sam.* 12. 11.

Thirdly, In sinning against the means, all excuse is taken away from man, *John* 15. 22. now they have no Cloak for their sin; Such cannot plead, They knew not, Had they known, they would not have done it. *Have they not heard, doth not Israel know* saith the *Apostle*, *Rom.* 10. 18, 19. yes verily, *their sound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the end of the World.* None so deep in Hell as knowing-men, *Luke* 12. 48. Did not I warne you said *Reuben* to his Brethren, and you would not hear; *Gen.* 42. 21. So will God say to such as have had the means, and profit not; Did not I tell you, warn you, advise you, threaten you? but you have despised all my warnings; This presseth the conscience with a heavy weight of guiltiness.

Fourthly, In respect of the proportion and correspondence that the account is to bear with the receipt, the sin must be great: By how much the greater the grace is, by so much stricter the account must be. Much grace received, asketh for much duty; and great duty neglected, must needs be great sin in the receiver; and the greater sin the greater punishment: *To whom God gives much, of him he requires much*; He requires a larger fruit.



fruit, or a larger punishment. Let us now come to the Application of the Point.

Hence we infer, that the sins of these Times, are greater then the sins of the Ages that have bin before us. And in these times, some Places; and in these Places, some Persons must needs stand guilty before God of more sin then others, in regard of the means which they have enjoyed above others.

The sins of the *Jews* were greater (*ceteris paribus*) then the sins of the *Gentiles*, for in Jury was God known; He hath not dealt so (saith David) with every other Nation, neither have they known his Judgments. And the sins of the Christian (if other Circumstances be matches) are greater then the sins of the *Jews*; sins committed under the Law, were not so great in God's account, as those which are committed under the Gospel: we have greater means, and a clearer light, and a larger effusion of the spirit then ordinarily they in those dayes had; they had but an aspersion of the Spirit, a sprinkling of it; but on us (living under the Gospel,) there hath bin a powring of it forth in a very large and plentiful measure; which greatly aggravates our sins and will enhance the reckoning, *Heb. 2. 2, 3, 4.*

And amongst us that live under the Gospel, the sins of some must needs be greater, then the sins of others: How did our forefathers (say some) who lived a hundred or two hundred years ago? I must tell you, That might be (and questionlesse was) accepted in them that will not be in us; they lived but in the dawning of the day, in Comparison of that light which we now enjoy. A man in the beginning of a clear night, can count the Stars that do appear; but after a while they appear so fast, that he is confounded: So those Stars, I mean Godly and Faithful Preachers, in the Dayes of our forefathers were very few, and might easly be numbred; Such a painful Minister five miles or ten miles off. (it might be not within twenty): but who are able to reckon up the number of those shining Lamps, that our Heavens are now bespangled withall?

And yet some Places, some Congregations have enjoyed more meanes, and that a longer time then others; Faithfull preaching they have had for thirty, forty, sixty years amongst them successively; and can we think that God expects no more from

Use 1.

*Psal. 147.*  
19, 20.

*Isa. 25. 7.*  
*2 Cor. 3.*  
18.

*Acts 1. 17.*

*Heb. 2. 2,*  
3, 4.

from them, then he doth from those, who have enjoyed the labours of a faithful Pastor, but for some few years onely; to whom much is given, of them much shall be required; where he hath given *πολύ*, he accepts not *μικρόν*.

And (to come a little nearer, and closer with the point); Some Persons stand more guilty before God of sin then others; they have bin of a longer standing in the School of Christ, read more, and heard more, and know more of God's will then others, and therefore must look, in case of disobedience, to be *beaten with more stripes* then others. Beloved,

Sweet Oynment causeth rank, and strong bodies to smell worse than they did before. And the Sun shining upon the Dunghill and heating it with its beams, causeth it to send forth the more loathsome savour; So is it with a wicked heart. It becomes more vile, for the sweet savour of the Gospel; and their sins more noysome in the Nostrils of Almighty God: Hence is it that Sathan is well content that we shall attend unto the means, and resort to God's House, Hear, Read, and Pray, &c. provided that we sin against the meanes, in not profiting thereby; He knows full well, that such sins do presse the conscience with more guiltinesse, dishonour God, discredit the Gospel most; and (as a Taper in the hand of a Ghost) it causeth the sinner to seem more gasty: Swearing, Lying, Killing, Stealing, Whoreing, and such like; are not so foul, so loathsome, so gasty in any Nation under Heaven, as in the English Nation. Nor shall they be so severely punished by God in any Nation, as in Ours (as anon I shall shew). We have bin lifted up to Heaven a great deal higher, in regard of the means then any other Nation hath bin, and therefore must look to be thrown lower into Hell then any other, because of our contempt. The Devil (saith one) will stand in Hell on i'prooe upon an English man's back, and if ever he hath a dainty bit, he will pick it from off the car-casses of such, as live under plenty of means, and profit not thereby: And when such shall plead for themselves at the last Day before Christ their Judge, and say, Lord, *We have often heard thee preach in our Synagogues, we have eat and drank in thy presence*, we have bin frequent resorters to thy House, both upon Sun-Dayes and Week-Dayes; this shall but aggravate their wicked-

*Ideo deteriores estis, quia meliores esse debetis.*



wickednesse: True, will Christ say to such (as being wicked yet thus plead,) Thou beganst the week with hearing two Sermons, and yet didst Couzen, Defraud, Oppresse, and Lye, Swear again and again, that very week when thou heardest those two Sermons; And that very day when thou wentest to such a Lecture, didst hear a man of note and fame, that very day thou wert drunk, didst act such or such a wickednesse &c. And canst thou think that thou shalt fare the better for that? no surely, but as *Galba* answered that rich Guardian, who hoped to find the more favour for his wealth; So will God answer thee, in that respect, Thou shalt have this favour to have the *higher and the whiter Crosse*: the like favour did *Ahasuerus* shew his Favorite *Haman*, whom he hanged on the Gallows that was 50 cubits high.

Wherefore, see that you be advised to profit by the means that God affoordeth to you for your profitting: Be not like unto that sullen Tree that we read of growing in *India*, which close hid it self against the beams of the Sun; Nor like those Fields which *Pliny* makes mention of, which are the dryer for the Rain, and moyster for Dust, (which caused *Cicero* jestingly to say that in that place Rain did cause dust, and Sunshine dirt). God expects better things from us; as I shall now more particularly shew you.

First, He looks that we should not onely profit by the means, but that our profitting should be answerable to the *plenty of means* afforded. whether they be Publique or Private, Outward or Inward; Verbal or Real: The rain coming *oft upon the ground* must cause it to bring forth *herbs*, not one here, and another there; but, plenty of herbs for the Dresser, *Heb. 6. 7*. According to the plenty of means he looks that our profitting should *appear to all*, *1 Tim. 4. 15*. There are many needlesse and unprofitable enquires made concerning God's Ordinances; as whether Reading, be not Preaching, and to be preferred before it? and whether Prayer be not preferred to either? Each Ordinance hath its use and end, and is appointed for thy profit and benefit; and it is expected that thou should profit by all, both by the one and the other, by thy Reading, Hearing, Praying, Singing, Communicating. Leave contending, and fall to profitting. Wherefore hath God furnished his Church with such

plenty

*Eth. 7. 9,*  
*10.*

*Use 2.*

*Plin. l. 31.*  
*c. 4.*

*Heb. 6. 7.*

*1 Tim. 4.*  
*15.*

For. Mart.  
fol. 150.

plenty of meanes, variety of gifts? but that we should thereby be better edified, and bring forth abundantly? *Bradford* bitterly laments his own unprofitablenesse, under the variety and plenty of means. Here in *London* (saith he) be such, and so many godly and learned Sermons, which these uncircumcized ears of mine do hear, (at the least thrice in a week) which were able to burst any man's heart, to relent, to repent, to believe; to love, and to fear that Gracious and Omnipotent Lord; but my Adamantine, obstinate, most unkind and unthankful heart, hearing my Lord so sweetly crying and calling unto me, now by His Law, now by his Gospel, and now by all His Creatures, to come, to come, even to Himself; I hide me with *Adam*, I play not onely *Samuel*, running to *Ely*, but I play *Jonas*, running to the Sea; and there I sleep upon the hatches, untill He please to raise up a Tempest; to turn, and look upon me as he did upon *Peter*, &c. Had he cause to Complain of his own unprofitableness under such variety and plenty of means, What cause then have we to Complain thereof at this Day?

Math. 12.  
41. 42.

Secondly, As our profiting must be answerable to the plenty and variety of means; so according to their Excellency. The better food (we say) the better blood. Our Saviour aggravates the sins of the Jews, shewing, that the sins of the Ninevites were not so great as theirs, in this respect, *They repented upon the Preaching of Jonah, and now a greater then Jonah was there*; at whose Preaching they repented not, *Math. 12. 41, 42.* And the Queen of the South (whom the Ethiopian Chronicles call *Mackeda*) *She shall rise up in Judgment against them to condemn them, for that she came out of a farr Country to hear the Wisdom of Solomon*; and that they having a greater then Solomon amongst them, would not vouchsafe to step out of their Doors to hear him. And this our Saviour took very ill (and well he might) that they set not as high a price upon Him and his Doctrine, as she did upon *Solomon* and his wisdom: Thou livest under the Ministry of such or such a man, whom thou confessest to be a powerful and soul-saving Teacher; thou hearest him constantly, and conceivest him to be one of the ablest Teachers in the Town, City, Country; Is thy profiting answerable? God expects that thou shouldst be richer in Knowledge, Faith, Repentance, Patience.



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&c. than others that live not under such excellent means as thou dost, and thou hast cause to blush for shame, to see *Daniel* and his Companions to be fatter, and look better with their pulse, then thou dost with all thy Dainty fare, *Dan. 1. 22.*

*Dan. 1. 22.*  
15.

15. Thirdly, Our profiting must be answerable to the *Time* that we have enjoyed the means; The want of this *Sr. Paul* sharply reproves in the *Hebrews*, when for the time ye ought to have bin *Teachers*, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and are become such as have need of *Milk* and not strong Meat; In regard of the Time that they had the means, they ought to have bin so well grounded in the Truth, as that they might have bin Instructors of others in the Mysteries of Salvation; and in that they were not so, their fault was the greater, and the more they had to answer for: *Cicero* expected an extraordinary measure of knowledge in his Son, for that he had heard and conversed with *Cratippus*, so long a time as a whole year: What think you, doth God expect from you who have lived many years under a settled Ministry? how well grounded ought you to be in your Religion? and yet Alas, how weak and ignorant are we? very Children in understanding: Had we enjoyed the means no otherwise then the *Samaritan* did, in transitu, as the Prophet passed by her House, God would have looked for some return: But the Ark of God amongst us hath not dwelt in Tents, and under Curtains, but a House is prepared for it, where it hath abided and bin settled for many years, he hath given us means to be better & more skillful in the Mysteries of Salvation every day then other, to day then yesterday; this year, then the last; He cannot, nor will He take it well; if like Children we should be ever learning and never come to the Knowledge of the Truth. Thus you hear what a profiting it is that God expects of us that live under the means; It must be answerable to the plenty of the means, to the excellency of the means; and proportionable to the time that we have enjoyed them.

*Heb. 5. 12.*

*2 King. 4.*  
10.

*2 Tim. 3. 7.*

Now that I may (if it be possible) settle this Doctrine upon your Consciences; let me commend a few things unto your most serious thoughts.

First, Know that God keeps a *strict account* of all the *meanes* that he hath afforded unto you for your good ; He records the very time when He sent His Servants unto a People, when they began to Preach, in what King's Reign, and how long they continued preaching unto a People, *Isa. 1. 1. Hos. 1. 1. Amos 1. 1.* It is upon Record how many Sermons they have Preached, as, *John 4. 54. This was the second miracle that Christ did when He was come out of Judea into Galilee :* So, *2 Cor. 13. 1. This is the third time that I am coming unto you :* Account is kept of what good is done at a Sermon, and how many profited thereby, *Acts 2. 41.* and so likewise of how many Sermons are lost ; and not one converted (without all question.)

Secondly, God keeps account (and that strictly) as of the *meanes* ; so of our *several provocations* in despising of those *meanes* ; *They have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my Voice* (saith God, *Numb. 14. 22.*) which number of *Ten* sometimes is taken indefinitely, in Scripture, for *many* ; As when *Jacob* told *Laban* that he had deceived him *ten times* of his wages, that is, many times, and so elsewhere ; But it is not to be taken here, for if we peruse the Scriptures, we shall find the several provocations to be numbred. The first was at the *Red Sea*, *Exod. 14. 11, 12.* The second at *Marah*, *Exod. 15. 23, 24.* A third in the *Wildernesse of Sin*, *Exod. 16. 2.* A fourth about *Mannah*, in leaving it till the morning, contrary to God's Command, *Exod. 16. 20.* A fifth about the same thing, in going out to gather it *upon the Sabbath*, *Exod. 16. 27, 28.* A sixth at *Rephidim*, *Exod. 17. 1, 2.* A seventh at *Horeb* in making the golden Calf, *Exod. 32. 8.* The eighth at *Taberah*, *Numb. 11. 1.* The ninth at *Kibroth Hattaavah*, *Numb. 11. 4.* The tenth at that time when God thus charged them by their rebellion in *Pharon*, *Numb. 14. 1, 2.* Thus exact God is in keeping an account of our provocations, and that to good purpose ; For,

God will produce the *meanes* to witness against us, if we profit not thereby ; So, *1 King. 11. 9. God was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice*, saith the Text ; So God will one day lay this to thy charge, I have spoken unto thee twice,

yea,

*Isa. 1. 1.*

*Hos. 1. 1.*

*Amos 1. 1.*

*John 4. 54.*

*2 Cor. 13. 1.*

*1.*

*Acts 2. 41.*

*Numb. 14. 22.*

*Gen. 31. 41.*

*Lev. 26. 26.*

*Job 19. 1. 3.*

*Answorth in loc.*

*Exod. 14. 11, 12.*

*Exod. 15. 23, 24.*

*Exod. 16. 2, & 16. 20, & 27, 28.*

*Exod. 17. 1, 2.*

*Exod. 32. 8.*

*Numb. 11. 1, & 11. 4.*

*Numb. 14. 1, 2.*

*1 King. 11. 9.*



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yea, many times, of the same thing; I have wrote four Evangelists, that out of the mouth of those four witnesses you might believe; I have sent unto you such a Servant of mine, and such another, yet all to no purpose: There is not a Sermon that you have heard, not an Example that you have seen, not a Crosse that you have felt, not a Blessing that you have received; but shall testifie against you for your unprofitablenesse. If a whole County shall come in against a man at the Assizes, you may well think that it will go hard with him.

Thirdly, The not profiting by the means, *causeth God to deprive us of them*, and take them from us, *Isa. 5. 3, Amos 8. 9, 11*, This God threatened to the Church of Ephesus, *Rev. 2. 5. I will remove thy Candlestick from thee*, and God made good his word. What God speaks, *Jer. 7. 12. Go now to Shiloh, where I sett my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my People Israel*; So may I say, Go to those seven Churches of Asia, and tell me if their Candle be not out; their Candlestick removed as God threatned? And when this cometh to passe. *Loe it will come to passe* (saith God, *Ezek. 33. 33.*) *then shall they know that a Prophet hath bin amongst them whom they disrespected*. When Guests begin to play with their meat, and blow over it; the Master of the Feast bids take away, and calls for a Voyder: When Servants, having a Candle allowed them to light them to their Lodging, let it burn out in waste, sitting, sleeping, or chatting by the fire, the Master comes and snatcheth away their light, and leaves them to grope in the dark their way to bed. It was not for nothing that God would not that the slaves should be plucked out of the Ark when it rested; though they were thrust in and hid, yet there they were to remain to let his People understand that if they did not walk worthy of that mercy, he could, yea would, call for his Porters to remove it, *1 King. 8. 2.*

Fourthly, The not profiting by the means, puts a man into a worse condition then if he never had enjoyed the means (as was shewed you in the proof of the Doctrine, by *Corazim, Bethsaida and Capernaum*). It had bin better for such that they had bin Sodomites and Gomorreans: And the time will come that such a one will wish, I would that I had bin a Sodomite or a Go-

*Isa. 5. 3.  
Amos 6. 9,  
11.  
Rev. 2. 5.  
Jer. 7. 12.*

*Ezek. 33.  
33.*

*1 King. 8.  
8.*

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morrhean, rather than a Christian; I would that I had bin an Indian a Pagan, a Turk, an Infidel, rather than an Englishman: Not that God shews lesse mercy to us then to them, but in regard of our despising so great mercy: It will be worse with us then with them, *Heb. 2. 2, 3.*

Fifthly, For this is a sin that *hastens wrath*, and *encreaseth vengeance*, *Dan. 9. 11.* It calls to Vengeance as the Captaine did to *Elisha*, *2 King. 1. 19. come down quickly.* It fills up our measure the sooner, *Math. 23. 32.* The Old World was very sinful, but it filled not up the measure, till it despised *Neba's warning*; nor was the measure of the *Sodinites* filled, till they came to despise *Lot*. When once God's Prophets come to be scorned and derided, then the Vessel becomes full, it can hold no more. Then the wrath of the Lord arose up against His People, *so that there was no remedy*, *2 Chron. 36. 15, 16.*

Sixthly, Nor is God ever so terrible or fierce against any in wrath, as against those who have had the best means, and obstinately despised them. *The sinners in Sion shall be afraid*, *Isa. 33. 14.* they must expect devouring burning; *Tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doth evil, upon the Jew first, and also upon the Gentile*; *Rom. 2. 9.* And how, *on the Jew first*? not onely for order of time, but for greatnesse of punishment. Who can read that threatning without astonishment, *Jer. 7. 13,—17.* and again, *vers. 25.—28.* God sent his Servants, yea, *all his Servants* to forewarn that People; they rose early, gave them warning time enough to prevent danger; but when they rejected and despised all Prophetes and Warnings, then followes that final and fearful sentence, *vers. 29. The Lord hath rejected and forsaken them*: Them; whom? Why *the Generation of his wrath*, The e is unsupportable horror in wrath, but in the generation of his wrath it is infinitely aggravated; As if they were a People upon whom God would exercise not some one act of his indignation, but multiply acts of his wrath on them, and that continually. It was a sad Complaint which in that respect the Church makes, *Lament. 1. 12. never sorrow like unto Her sorrow.* Oh! that it may never happen to this Church of England to make the like Complaint. After the clearest flash of lightening, followeth

Heb. 2. 2,

3.

Dan. 9. 11.

2 King. 1.

19.

Mat. 23.

32.

2 Chron.

36. 15, 16.

Isa. 33. 14.

Rom. 2. 9.

Jer. 7. 13,

—13.

Vers. 25.

—28.

Vers. 29.

Lament. 1.

12.



followeth the terriblest clapp of thunder ; Me thinks if these things were thought seriously upon, and laid to heart, they could not but work a greater care in us then formerly; to profit by the means of our good. But I forbear any further application of the point, give me onely leave to acquaint you with what the Oracle foretold of the City *Nyna*, that it should never be won till the River became an enemy unto it, which afterwards came to passe ; for through abundance of rain the River so encreased that it overthrew the Walls thereof. I wish that what that Oracle foretold of *Nyna* may not be verified in us, in respect of plenty of means enjoyed ; Plenty of means hath caused (through our corruption) a Deluge of Opinions, and that such an Inundation of Heresie and Schism, that (it is to be feared,) it no sluice be made to let out and draw those waters, not onely the City, but the Kingdom will be ruined ; *For if a Kingdom be divided against it self, How can it stand?* But of the Complaint enough : Come we now unto the *sentence denounced* against this Tree, for its barrennesse.

*Nyna.*

*Cut it down, Why Cumbers it the ground?*

*Text.*

Herein take notice, first, of the *Severity* of the sentence, *Cut it down*: Secondly, of the *Equity* thereof, *Why Cumbers it the ground?*

*Abscinde eam, Cut it down.*

Could He not as easily have done it, as spoke it? Yes, without question ; But,

*It is God's usual manner to speak before He strikes, to pronounce Judgment, before He Executes it :* He doth premonish before He doth punish ; and warn before He wound.

*Doct.*

He seldom comes to that quick dispatch, *a word and a blow*, but without a word to a blow, to an execution without warning, never.

*At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation (saith God), and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it, Jer. 18.7.9. Now therefore go speak to the men of Judah, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, &c. vers. 11. So then, God will speak unto a Nation, before He strike that Nation; and send His Servants to warn them, before He utterly destroy them. The Lord will roare from*

*Jer. 18.7.  
9.  
Vers. 11.*

*from*

Amos 1. 2,  
& 3. 8.

from Zion before He apeare, and utter His Voyce from Jerusalem that the Inhabitants may be afraid, Amos 1. 2, & 3. 8. His roaring is the warning given, before He come and seize upon the Prey; He will be heard threatning, before he be felt in executing of His Judgments.

I might be large and long in the proof of this, and bring many Instances for the confirmation of the Point, I shall trouble you onely with a few.

Gen. 6. 13,  
14.  
Heb. 11. 7.

Before God brought the flood on the Old World, He gave warning thereof; First, He acquainted *Noah* with his purpose, Gen. 6. 13, 14. Heb. 11. 7. and by him he warned the World in the building of the Ark; every blow that was given with Axe or Hammer in the making thereof, was a warning piece before the murdering-piece was Discharged: His pains taken in the building of that Ark to eschew wrath, condemned the security of the World which would not be warned.

2 Pet. 2. 8.

Gen. 19.  
14.

The cry of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* was very great, and their sins grievous; yet God would not destroy them before warning given; He sends *Lot* amongst them, who (without doubt) Preached daylie to them; not onely by his regular and exemplary life, but likewise by his perswasion to Repentance and Obedience: For that righteous man (saith St. Peter) dwelling amongst them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from Day to Day with their unlawful deeds, 2 Pet. 2. 8. And the very night before their ruine, he admonished them (as a Prophet); and advised them. (as a Father); but both in vain, Gen. 19. 14.

Exod. 6.  
19.

*Pharaoh* and his People (as unworthy as they were) yet they must have warning by *Moses* and *Aaron* before the Land be Plagued, Exod. 6. 29. Ten several warnings they had, one after another, before they were utterly destroyed in the Red Sea.

Numb. 16.  
31, 32.

Numb. 16.  
5, 14, 20,  
24, 25, 32.

In *Corah's* case, God seemed to be more quick, and to proceed apace towards execution, the Earth opened Her mouth and swallowed them up quick, (saith the Text, Numb. 16. 31, 32.) But God began not there; He first opened his mouth, and *Moses* and *Aaron* theirs, and the Elders theirs; They had a Reprieve; and after another Summons before Execution, (which followed upon their consumacy), Numb. 16. 5, 14, 20, 24, 25, 32.

Ninevie



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Ninevie shall be sent unto, and have warning given them before their overthrow, yet forty Dayes and Ninevie shall be destroyed, Jon. 3. 4. & 4. 10. And other Heathen Nations shall have all of them their warning, as *Babylon*, and *Moab*, and *Egypt*, and *Damascus*, and *Ammon*, and *Edom*; all must hear of their burthen before it come, *Isaiah* is sent to them with it, as we read, *Isa. 13. 1. & 15. 1. & 17. 1. & 19. 1. & 21. 1. 11. 13. & 23. 1. & 30. 6.*

As for *Israel* and *Judah*, how often were they premonished of that Captivity, which afterwards befell them under the *Assyrians*? *2 King. 17. 6.* God had testified against them long before by all his Prophets, and by all the Seers, as by *Ahijah*, *Jehu Eliab*, *Michajah*, *Elisha*, *Obadiah*, *Hosea*, *Amos*, *Joel*, &c. by all these he foretold them what should befall them, albeit they would take no warning, *2 King. 17. 14, 15, 16.* And, before the Captivity of *Judah*, and destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Babylonians*, they were forewarned of it by *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Micha*, *Zephaniah*, for the space of threescore years together, even unto the very day that they were taken Captive, albeit they would not hearken, nor receive correction, nor draw near unto the Lord, *Zeph. 2. 3, 5. Zachar. 7. 12.*

And before the last and utter subversion of the Jewish Nation, how many warnings were given them? *John Baptist* tells them that the *Axe was now laid to the very Root of the Tree*, *Mat. 3. 10.* So as utterly to destroy them, and cut them off from being a People: Our Saviour himself (even with tears in his eyes) tells them what would befall them, *Luke 19. 42.* In plain terms, He acquaints them with the manner of their destruction, and the grievousness of it: So, *Math. 23. 37. & 24. 2, 15, 26.* Behold, (saith Christ) *I have told you before*, that being forewarned you may be fore-armed and prepared.

It was a Law established in *Israel*, that when they came unto a City to fight against it, they should first proclaim peace unto it, and if they made answer of Peace, and opened their Gates, then all those that were found in that City, should become Tributaries unto *Israel*, and serve them; but if in Case they would make no Peace, then they should all be put to the Sword, and none of the men be spared, *Deut. 20. 10, 11, 12, 13.* which Law

*Jon. 3. 4. & 4. 10.*  
*Isa. 13. 1, & 15. 1, & 17. 1, & 19. 1, & 21. 1, 11. 13, & 23. 1, & 30. 6.*  
*2 King. 17. 6.*

*2 King. 17. 14, 15, 16.*

*Zeph. 2. 3, 5.*  
*Zach. 7. 12.*

*Mat. 3. 10.*

*Luke 19. 42.*  
*Mat. 22. 37. & 24. 2, 15, 26.*

*Reas.*

*Deut. 20. 10. &c.*

is approved of by the very Heathen, and hath bin put in, practise by most Nations: When *Alexander* besieged any City, he would send his Herald to it with a burning Torch, and caused it to be proclaimed in that City, that if any man would repaire and submit himself unto him within the Compasse of time, that the Torch continuing burning he should be spared, and find mercy; otherwise, nothing but Fire and Sword was to be expected. The like we read of *Tamerlane* the warlike Scythian, when he came against any place, he first displayed a *white Flagg*, in token of mercy, if they accepted it; the second day a *red Flagg*, threatening blood; the third day he caused a *black Flagg* to be hung forth, the Ensigne of Death; intimating unto them that now there was no mercy to be expected. And the *Turks* at this day are of opinion that God would not prosper them in their assaults, except they first make some offer of Peace unto their enemies, (how unreasonable soever, it matters not): so they did at the last fatal siege of *Constantinople*. Now the Lord by this his practise doth give us to understand how well he approves of the Law which he had given to *Israel*, and that he who is the God of Nature, is not willing that the Course of Nature should be perverted.

More particularly God doth this, First, for his chosen People's sake, that they being warned, may not be taken unprepared, but that their Faith and Obedience might be manifested in their believing and fearing of the Lord, and the tokens of his wrath, *Heb. 11. 7.* and that by their prayers and humiliations they might turn away God's wrath, from a Nation (if it be possible) (as *Moses* did many times from *Israel*). Or, if not so, yet that they themselves may find rest in the day of trouble, *Hab. 3. 16.*

Secondly, In regard of the wicked, that if it be possible they may be brought to Repentance, and amendment of Life; and by his warnings *fly from the wrath to come* (as *John* the Baptist intimates to the Scribes and Pharisees (that generation of Vipers), *Math. 3. 7.* But if in case they will take no warning, then that the mouth of wickednesse may be stopped, and sinners left without excuse; who are apt enough to say, Had we known or had warning of the danger, we would have prevented it. *Solo-*

*Turk. Hist.*  
p. 344.

*Heb. 11. 7.*

*Hab. 3. 16.*

*Math. 3. 7.*

*Psal. 51. 4.*



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mon thus stopped the mouth of *Shimei*, Did not I protest unto thee, saying, Know for a certain that in the day that thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely dye? Why hast thou not kept the Commandment that I charged thee? And so will God one day stop the mouths of all obdurate and impenitent Sinners, when they fall into the pit of destruction. Did not I warn you of this, long since? Did not I protest unto you, that if you willfully persisted in your disobedience, you should be destroyed? wherefore thy destruction is from thy self, thy blood be upon thine own head.

Behold therefore, and admire as the severity of God in this Sentence, Cut it down, (of which anon); to the goodnesse of God in foretelling of it, that it may be prevented. His warnings are not set like lime-twiggs to catch us; but they are intended, as *Jonathans* arrowes were to *David*, for the preventing of future mischief. An enemy that seeks our ruine, keeps close his intentions, and is glad to take us at any advantage, and will steal upon us before we be aware (as the Pocher doth upon the Hare, whilst she sits upon her form, and then knocks her on the head); Satan never barks before he bites, never tells before he tempts; because he desires and endeavours the ruine of mankind: So it is with his Servants; Thus dealt *Absolon* with his Brother *Amnon*, he spake neither good nor bad unto him, but waited for an opportunity to slay him unawares, 2 Sam. 13. 22, 28. And the King of Syria was offended that his secret Plots against the King of Israel, were discovered unto him, whom he desired suddenly to surprize, 2 King. 6. 8. And such was the project of *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* with other enemies of the Church, they shall not know, neither see (say they) till we come in the midst amongst them, and slay them, Neh. 4. 11. God proceeds not thus with us, His Battails are alwayes with the noyse of Drum and Trumpet, He reveals his intentions to cut down and destroy, that he may not destroy; He warns before he strikes, that we may by taking warning prevent the blow, and not be stricken by him. The Cannon first kills, and after that makes the Report; But the Clap of Thunder comes not before a flash of Lightning; the Lightning first invades the sense, albeit the Thunder first breaks the Clouds, and makes way for it.

2 King. 2.  
42.

Use I.  
Rom. 11.  
22.

2 Sam. 13.  
22, 28.

2 King. 6.  
8.

Neh. 4. 11.

Psal. 103.

Bernard.  
Lament. 2.  
23.  
Isa. 28. 21.Mich. 1. 3.  
Mich. 7.  
18.1 King. 19.  
2.  
2 King. 18.Psal. 45. 3.  
Deut. 32.  
41, 42.

Psal. 7. 12.

This indeed God need not do. The curse denounced against all transgressors of his righteous Law is warning enough; but yet, that he may declare unto us the riches of his mercy, how *slow he is to wrath, and ready to forgive*, he doth this. The *Father of mercies*, God is often called in Scripture, because mercy naturally proceeds from him; but we find him not styled the *Father of Revenge*; because that is unwillingly inflicted; So saith *Jeremiah*, He doth not afflict us willingly, nor grieve the Children of men; shewing-Mercy is his proper work, Judgment is his strange work, Isa. 28. 21. Therefore when he comes in a way of Judgment against a People, he is said to come forth *out of his place*, Mich. 1. 3. then he is in the place that he delights in, when he sits upon his *mercy Seat*, Mich. 7. 18.

Some threaten what they will do, and indeed would do it had they Power; but this is all they can do, to threaten that they will do it, as did *Jezabel*, 1 King. 19. 2. and *Rabshekah*, 2 King. 18. But it is otherwise with God, he hath *Vengeance in store*; the sword is alwayes girded on his thigh; Albeit it be not alwayes drawn, yet it is not rivetted in; His hand can take hold of it and draw it forth, and then he will render vengeance on his enemies, and his sword shall devour flesh, Deut. 32. 41, 42. But before it doth so, he will *whet it*, and make it glitter, (as *Moses* there speaks,) we may hear him wherting of that Sword, and see the glittering of it, before he smite with it; Nor doth he proceed so far, but in case that a People or Nation turn not from their evil wayes upon former warnings. If he turn not, he will *whet his Sword*, saith *David*, Psal. 7. 12. *Yea, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready, he hath also prepared for him the Instruments of Death*: The Bow shall be used before the Sword; other Judgments sent before the Sword be put in Commission to devour flesh. Indeed an Arrow when it is let flye out of the Bow, comes so swiftly as that it is hardly discernable; (except we discern it at the first loosing and watch it all the while) but the bending of the bow doth not hurt us; it onely forewarns us of the Arrow that is ready in the Quiver to be taken out and put into the Bow, to be let flye upon us for our sins, which are the *white* that we our selves have set up; no sooner do we take that down, but God unbends his Bow, and puts his Arrows again into



into his Quiver. *I will blasse the Lord* (said David), *who hath given me Counsel*; so may we say, I will blasse God who hath given me warning: It is a great mercy, and deserves all thankful acknowledgment, and is as much as our lives are worth, had we the grace to make use of these warnings.

Psal. 16.7.

But may it not be truly said of us in this sinful Land, as Solomon speaks of evil men, *they understand not Judgment*. God hath plyed us with warnings; but what was said of Ephraim, may be said of England, *It hath a silly heart*, Hos. 7. 11. And the same Arguments that are brought to prove the one, may confirme the other: *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not*; yea, *gray haire*s are here and there upon him, yet he knows it not, vers. 9. their strength failed them; the Prognostick signes of their approaching end was upon them, yet they were dull and stupid; *they knew it not, they knew it not*, their fault is redoubled. They knew it not, for that they would not know, although they might, for it was easie enough to be seen and known, had they not bin like a *silly Dove without heart*.

Use 2.

Prov. 28.5.

Hos. 7. 11.

Vers. 9.

Never had any Nation more visible signes of approaching Vengeance then our *English* Nation; nor was there ever any Nation that made lesse use of them then this Nation hath done. Vengeance was wrote *on the wall* before *Belsazzar*, but it was in an unknown Language, he could not read it; so are God's notifications and premonitions of his anger and hot displeasure against us written upon the walls of our Pallaces, but they are as an unknown Language unto us; we will not read them so, as to understand the meaning.

Dan. 5. 5.

The Jews famous Antiquary (*Josephus*) tells us of seven several portentous prodigies, whereby God warned *Jerusalem* of Her ruine a little before the destruction of it by *Vespasian*; Give me leave to acquaint you, or (rather) put you in mind of seven several wayes, whereby God hath given us warning of what hath befallen us, (and yet continues warning us of heavier Judgments that will certainly befall us, if our timely Repentance prevent not.)

Joseph. de  
Bello Ind.  
l. 7, c. 12.

First, He hath warned us by the mouths of his Ministers, whom he hath sent abroad into all parts of the Kingdome, with his *Subpana's* to summon us in; They have told us of our dan-

Luther  
*Prefat. in  
 Hof. Proph.*

ger (both in Pulpit and Presse,) and cryed out with that *Jesus* the Son of *Ananias* (of whom *Josephus* speaks,) who four years before the Romans came against *Jerusalem*, went up and down the City, and especially in the Temple, crying *Wo, Wo, Wo, to Jerusalem*. They foretold us of what we have (in part) felt, and yet continue crying, *One Wo is past, and two Woes more are yet to come*. Indeed, they have not that Prophetical Spirit which the Servants of God in old time had, (for to them it was many times revealed what People should be punished; what kind of Judgment should be inflicted; and at what time upon a People (saith *Luther*): yet they wisely comparing things present with things past; and diligently observing what sins those are which usually provoke God to smite with Sword, Famine, and Pestilence, &c. conclude, not onely in general that some heavy Plague will befall the Nation, but (in all probability) such or such a Plague as the Sword, Famine, or Pestilence; forasmuch as those sins are most ripe in the Nation, which is usually punished with those particular Judgments.

Jer. 4. 19,  
 20, 21, 22.  
 Jer. 14. 13,  
 17.  
 2 Chron.  
 36. 15, 16,  
 17.  
 Jer. 9. 23.  
 — 17.  
 Jer. 34. 18.  
 Jer. 15. 1,  
 2, 6.  
 Isa 3. 16,  
 25.  
 Lev. 26.  
 26, — 36.

The sins that bring the Sword upon a Nation are these, *Ignorance of God* and his wayes, *Jer. 4. 19, 20, 21, 22*. *Prophecying lyes in the name of God* and entertaining them, *Jer. 14. 13, 17*. *mocking and misusing the Messengers of God*, and despising the Word that is brought us unto by them, *2 Chron. 36. 15, 16, 17*. *Idolatry*, *Jer. 9. 13, — 17, & 16. 4, 11, 12*. *Breach of Covenant*, *Jer. 34. 18*. *Back-sliding and forsaking of God*, *Jer. 15. 1, 2, 6*. *Pride and haughtinesse*, *Isa. 3. 16, 25*. *Incorrigiblenesse under God's Judgments*, *Levit. 26. 26, — 36*. These amongst other sins (whereof we are deeply guilty) and are threatned to be punished with the Sword, (in a peculiar manner), did cause them to conclude that the Sword would be the Judgment that would fall upon us, which we have found true, and them therein to be true Prophets: And now perceiving no reformation to follow this heavy Judgment that hath befallen us, but still those sins remain amongst us, which the Sword was sent to punish; and that other sins appear, which the Sword hath brought with it that were not before (so ripe) amongst us, they must needs conclude that some heavier Judgment will befall us; (for it is not God's way to suffer himself to be overmastered otherwise than by

earnest



earnest prayer and serious humiliation) : He is just and will overcome in Judgment.

Warnings of this kind, we have leightly set by: when we have told you what would follow your sinful courses, we have seemed to you to mock, and to be in jest, (as *Lot* seemed unto his Sons in Law to do); And you have bin ready to say to us, as that fantastical Musician said unto his Neighbours, (who told him that his House was on fire, but he was so transported with his Raptures, as that he returned no other answer but this), Either hold your tongues or sing in tune. When we give you warning as God hath strictly commanded us to do, *Ezek. 3. 17.* and tell you that God's wrath is kindled against you, and will break forth to your undoing, if it be not quenched, you are apt to imagine that we know not what we say, and because those Judgments threatned do not presently befall you, you are ready to conceive that we have but deluded and affrighted you with needless fears.

It was thus with the ten Tribes, as we read, *Jer. 23. 33.* God sent his Prophets to them to forewarn them of those Judgments which afterwards befel them; whose predictions and prophecies, and denunciations were usually termed *Burthens*, and because these Judgments denounced did not presently fall upon them, they began to scoff and mock the Prophets when they came unto them, and to say in scorn; Now, Prophet, *What is the burden of the Lord, what is the burden you now bring? Say unto them* (saith the Lord), *This is the burden of the Lord, I will even forsake you*, that is, I will utterly cast you off, and that you shall find to be burden enough. Would you have yet more weight upon you? why then, (as it is elegantly and emphatically added, *vers. 36.*) *every man's word shall be his burthen*, that is, that which he saith, shall be that which shall be laid to his charge, his scorning, his idle questioning of the Prophet, *What burden now? What Sword? What Famine? What Pestilence?* Is not all Quiet, all at Peace, all well with us, for all your crying (out of tune, out of season) *Wo, Wo, Well* (saith God) your mocking and deriding of those denunciations and forewarnings in the mouths of my Prophets shall be your burthen, and aggravate those Judgments, that shall befall you, and seeing you say this word,

*Ezek. 3.  
17.*

*Jer. 23. 33,  
— 40.  
Enlight-  
ned and  
Explained.*

word, *the burden of the Lord* I have sent unto you my Prophets, and charged them, saying, you shall not say any more unto them *The burden of the Lord*, vers. 38. that is, they shall not bestow any more such care upon you, as to tell you that the Lord threatens you; And this is a heavier burden then the former. *Gods presence in anger*, His frowning and threatening, yea, smiting and punishing is heavy, but *God's absence and dereliction* is a far heavier burden, for mark what follows, vers. 39. *Therefore Behold, I even I will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you and that City that I gave you and your Fathers, and cast you out of my presence; and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall not be forgotten.* Now the Lord look in mercy upon us, and forgive us this sin in despising these warnings which he hath given us, and doth daylie yet give us by the mouths of his faithful Ministers.

Joel 2. 30.

Binsly  
his third  
part of the  
true watch.  
c. 3. p. 16.

Anno.

{ 1618.  
1652.

Psal. 18.  
14, 29, 3.

Serr. Fren.  
Hist. l. 1.  
p. 521.

Secondly, He hath warned us by himself more immediately by wonders from Heaven, *Blood and Fire and Pillars of Smoak*; strange and fiery impressions in the Aire, our eyes have seen; Sometimes the Heavens have seemed to be of a light fire, and to burn over our heads; Sometimes hath appeared (as it were) a fiery Tent spread directly over us, with Pillars of horrible darkness, Pillars of fire, and Pillars of Blood: Sundry prodigious Comets, and blazing Starrs have appeared, (of which, albeit some natural reason may be rendered, yet being extraordinary they do warn us of God's anger, and threaten Judgment.) By terrible Thunder and Lightning, *the most High hath uttered his Voyce, and that a Mighty Voyce* beating down, and consuming therewith not onely many Houses and Villages, but some of his own Houses and Temples, wherein his name is called upon, and even then whilst People have presented themselves before him to serve him, and call upon his name; as if he would warn us to approach his presence with more reverence and fear. And how often hath he made our Heavens as Brass in withholding the Clouds from watering the Earth, so that the grass withered, and the fruits were pitched by reason of extream heat and drought? In the French History we read of a year which the French termed the year of *Rosted Vines*: Such years we have had, which might be styled years of parched corne.

Thirdly.



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Thirdly, As God hath given us warning from Heaven above, so from the *Earth beneath*, as by the quaking and shaking of it; which however Philolophy impures to the Aire shut up in the bowels of the Earth, yet we are taught to look higher, and apprehend it as a manifest signe of God's fierce wrath and anger, *Psal.* 18. 7, 8, 9. *Zach.* 14. 15. Warnings of this nature *England* hath had many; In the year 1579 our Chronicles make mention of such an Earth-quake here in *England*, as that it tolled the great Bell at *Westminster*, and threw down a piece of *Dover Castle*, and a part of *Sutton Church* in *Kent*: In the year 1601 there was another great Earth-quake that made *St. Maries Bell* in *Cambridge* to toll. And in the year 1626 *March 27*, there was another felt in some places very terrible. The like hath bin in some other places of latter years (as hath bin credibly reported). This quaking and shaking of the Earth, is to awaken and shake the Inhabitants thereof out of their security (if it be possible); and doth commonly precede, and go before the alteration of Religion (as hath bin by some observed). Add hereunto the strange sinking of the ground in the year 1657 at *Bickley* in *Cheshire*, (as not being able to bear the load of sin that is committed upon it); And the monstrous births that have bin brought forth of late years, both of Man and Beast; as warnings to repent of our monstrous sins. *Distresse of Nations on Earth with perplexity*, is made a prodigious signe of God's anger, and of approaching vengeance by our Saviour, *Luke* 21. 25. And who can say that this Nation hath not bin thus warned?

Fourthly, As we have had extraordinary warnings from Heaven above, and from the Earth beneath; So from the waters under the Earth. The Sea roaring and swelling after an unwonted manner, (as if that signe were fulfilled, (likewise,) which our Saviour makes mention of in the former Text that we quoted, *Luke* 21. 25.) The Inundations and breaking in of that unruly Creature into the firme Land, in divers parts of this Realm, to the overthrowing and breaking down of whole Towns and Villages, (to the number of 26 Parishes in one Shire.) The unwonted flux and reflux of it; The doubling of the Tides in the River of *Thames* (a thing not ordinary) yet twice or thrice

*Acts* 2. 29.

*Prov.* 18.  
7, 8, 9.  
*Zach.* 14.  
15.

*Tops on*  
*Joel.* p.  
253.

*Luke* 21.  
25.

*See the Re-*  
*ports of*  
*Englands*  
*floods.*  
*Anno.*  
*1607.*

Jer. Dyke  
his Sermon  
preached  
before the  
House of  
Parliament  
Ap. 5.  
1628.  
p. 22.  
Trop. in  
Math. 17.  
Vers. 27.  
Mich. 6.9.

Lament. 4.  
16.  
1 King. 12.

thrice happening within these few years. And not long before these bloody Warrs began, and within a while after that Comet which appeared 1618, there was a Book found in a Pike's belly, which was brought to the University of Cambridge, (a little before the Commencement); The fish being taken and opened, *John Frish's Preparation to the Crosse* was in the maw of it; This we find related by a Reverend Divine, and one of great Note, and that to the Commons House of Parliament, in a Sermon that he Preached before them at a publique Fast; And his Observation upon it is, That such a Book should in such a manner, and to such a place, and at such a time be sent, (when by reason of Peoples confluence out of all parts, notice might be given to all places of the Land), can be construed for no lesse then a divine warning, and to have this Voyce with it, *England prepare for the Crosse*. And what may we think of the coming up of that fish of an extraordinary bigness (almost to the City of London,) there taken and killed this year 1658. Surely the sending of this fish so near the City, hath a voyce to the City; The Lord give us wise hearts to hear it, and understand the meaning.

Fifthly, Our *home-bred divisions and distractions*, civil Rents and garboyles; factions and factions in Church and State; are no other then warnings of God's heavy displeasure: *The anger of the Lord hath divided them* (saith *Jeremiah*, *Lament. 4. 16*). In *Rehoboams* Reign division amongst Councellours, caused the rending of the Tribes (ten from two,) and that rending ruined all. So whilst *Israel* was hot against *Judah*, and *Judah* against *Israel*, the King of *Syria* came and smote both; whilst the Frogg and the Moule are fighting for the prey, the greedy Kite devours both it and them.

In the Church who sees not, and seeing laments not (unlesse they be such as cry, *Raze it, raze it, even to the ground*). The difference in Judgment and Opinion that is amongst us, which is carryed with such heat, that (like brinish lights) we spit fire in the faces of one another, and so (it may be feared) will continue, till we be extinct and go out in a stinch and smoak. In short, not a City, nor a Town of note, nor a Village, scarce a Family (if any whitt numerous) that is not divided; the Husband against the Wife, the Wife against the Husband; Father against

Child,



Child, and Child again Father, &c. and can we look upon these divisions without great thought of heart? doth it not cry aloud in our ears that a Kingdom, a Church, a Family, divided against it self cannot stand? Division is a thick black Cloud that threatens destruction; what is *divisible* is *corruptible*, is a distaste in Nature; And Religion teacheth that the Daughter of *Division* is *desolation*, (saith *Nazianzen*) and holds true in all States and Societies whatsoever.

*Omne Divisible est corruptibile.*

Sixthly; *Innovation, alteration, and change of a good Government for a worse*; either in Church or State, is a Testimony of God's heavy displeasure; So we read, *Isa. 3. 1, 9. I will take away from Jerusalem the stay and the staff*; and what he means there by stay and staff he shews, *vers. 2. 3. The mighty man, and the man of War, the Judge and the Prophet, and the Prudent, and the Ancient, &c.* (such as are as stakes in the hedge, and keep it from reelings;) and shall substitute in their room, *Children and Babes to Rule*, as you have it, *vers. 4.* that is, such as are inept and unexperienced for Government; Then follows (as the effect of this) *Oppression and Sedition, one neighbour shall oppress another, every one his Brother, the Child shall behave himself proudly against the Ancient, and the Babe against the Honourable*, *vers. 5.* no respect shall be had of mens callings and conditions; every one shall seek to have Magistrates after their own hearts, and not after God's, and choose to themselves Governours when they best fancy, thinking thereby to repair their ruins, and have their Liberties restored, *vers. 6.* the turbulencies and discontentments of the People shall be such, as that none shall be found either fit or willing to take upon them the administration of the Kingdom, and the Government of so head-strong and seditious a people, *vers. 7.* when it is thus with a Nation (and Oh that it were not so with ours!) then this presageth the fall of that People, and their ruine is at hand; (as you have it, *vers. 8.*) *Jerusalem is ruin'd, and Judah is fallen because their tongues and their doings are against the Lord to provoke the eyes of his glory.*

*Isa. 3. 1, 9. Explained. Vers. 2. 3.*

*Vers. 4.*

*Vers. 5.*

*Vers. 6.*

*Vers. 7.*

*Vers. 8.*

I may not say that it is thus with us. but this I may say; Our present condition is as like it as if it were the same: God hath taken from us our chief staff and stayes, our principal Gover-

Isa. 57. 1.

nours, gravest Judges, wisest Counsellours, ablest Divines, (and that within these few years,) a sad preface that some great evil will befall us, *Isa. 57. 1.* God seldom beheads a State, but it is for Treason; The Heart Plots it, the Hand Acts it, but it is the Head that payes for it. How weary were we grown of a good Monarchical Government, under which we prospered, and flourished for many years, (which indeed is the best forme of Government under Heaven). You weary (said *Themistocles* to the *Athenians*) of receiving so many Benefits by one man? Indeed we were weary, and longed for a change; we had it, and were as soon weary of that we longed for, as *Ammon* was of his Sister *Thamar*, after he had enjoyed his longing (or lusting rather). And now as *Sampson* did by the jaw bone of the Ass; which he flung away after he had slain therewith many of the Philistins, (he being a thirst and ready to dye for want of water, upon Gods command returnsto his jaw-bone again, and thence hath water to refresh him) we are returned to that Government which we despised, from which, if ever we look for comfortable refreshment, we must find it; and yet still we are a discontented people, nothing will please us; and who can but look upon this as an evident token of God's heavy wrath and displeasure against us? When *Bees* make a great humming noyse, it is likely they will forsake their Hives, and are about to take their flight.

Judg. 15.  
17. 19.1 Sam. 20.  
20.

Seventhly and Lastly, God hath warned us by many *lesser and lighter Judgments* that have befallen us, which are like to the lighting of *Jonathan's* arrows one beyond the other, and call upon us to provide with all speed for our own safety. God dealth with man herein after the manner of men, he usually taketh a *distress* by gentle and fatherly corrections; before he takes out an *Execution* by greater Judgments. God was unto *Ephraim* as a *moth in the Garment*, and unto the House of *Judah* as a *worm in the Tree*, (which caused rottennesse:) before he was to *Ephraim* as a *Lion*, and as a *young Lion* to the House of *Judah*, to reare and go away with the prey, *Hos. 5. 12, 14.* The *moth* in the Garment; and the *worm* in the Timber are but small Creatures, yet lingeringly, and by degrees they consume and eat; the moth by eating now one thread, and then another in the Garment, prepares it (with much ease) to be rend and torn in pieces; and the worme

Hos. 5. 12.  
14.  
Explained.



worme in the Tree soon eats out the heart, it causeth it to rot, and prepares it to the fire : God by smaller and lesser Judgments would be as a moth and a worine to that people ; but when Ephraim shall see his sickness, and Judah his wound, that is, when they shall perceive the weaknesse of their Kingdom, and decay of their State, it they make not the right use thereof, in repenting and returning to the Lord, but will trust to their own Counsels, and put their trust in their own Confederacies, and go to Assyria, or King Jareb for succour ; *I will then be* (saith God) *to Ephraim as a Lyon, and as a young Lyon to the House of Judah, I will tear and go away. I will take away, and none shall rescue ;* he will be terrible in his iature Judgments, for making no better use of the former. And Amos to the same purpose, Cap. 4. 6. *I have given you cleanness of teeth in all your Cities, and want of bread in all your Places, yet you have not returned unto me saith the Lord :* that is, I have endeavoured to reclaime you by affli- sions, and therefore have sent want and scarcity amongst you ; yet that did not amend you, then I added to your hunger, thirst : *I have withholden the rain from you, — so that two or three Cities wandered unto one City to drink water, but they were not satisfied, but yet you have not returned to me saith the Lord,* vers. 7. 8. Then I smot you with blasting and mildew, your Gardens, and your Vineyards, and your Figg-Trees, and your Olive Trees did the Pal- mer worms devour. I punished you in all these things wherein you took any delight, and might any way refresh you, under that calamity which I layd upon you ; and yet you have not returned unto me saith the Lord, vers. 9. *I have sent among you the Pestilence, after the manner of Egypt ;* a very noysome and deadly Pestilence, such a one as I plagued the Land of Egypt withall, ver. 10. this was a soarer Judgment then the former, yet they retur- ned not to the Lord : God proceeds yet higher ; *I have overthrown some of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,* that is, by the fire of the Assyrians as Sodom and Gomorrah were desloy- ed by fire from Heaven ; and those of them of Samaria that were left out of the common destruction, were but as a brand snatcht out of the fire, miserably burnt and scorched ; yet you returned not unto me saith the Lord, vers. 11. All this doing no good, there- fore this will I do unto thee O Israel, vers. 12. that is, I am re-

Amos 4. 6.  
—12.  
Explained.

solved to do this, that I have foretold by my Prophets; *I will take you away with hooks, and your Posterity with fishhooks,* (as it was said before, *vers. 2.*) I will execute upon thee the severest of all my Vengeances, and by the *Affyrian* snatch you out of your own Country, as the fish is caught up out of the water by the hook of the Angler: And thus God proceeded by degrees from the lesse to the greater, with the ten Tribes, by one Judgment warning them of another.

And such warnings have we had from time to time; easier afflictions we've bittered amongst us, before extreimity of mischiefesed on us; The *moth* and the *Timber-worm* were many years at work, before the *Lyon* roared and the *young Lyon* seized upon the prey. This Nation hath bin *moth-eaten* for divers years, Trading hath much decayed (whereof great complaint hath bin a long time made) *illegal Taxes* and *Impositions* we have groaned under; *Monopolists* and *corrupt Officers*, (like moths and timber-worms) have eaten into our estates, &c. yet all this did us no good: God hath smote this Nation with scarcity and famine within these few years (albeit in a moderate way): It hath not bin like the scarcity that was in *Egypt*, he hath seemed onely to pick those teeth that were turred and fowled with excess: we have not yet seen with our eyes an *Asses head* sold for 80 pieces of silver, and a *Cab of Doves dung* for 20 peices; nor have we heard of any Mother amongst us that hath re-womb'd and reintomb'd, the fruit of her body for want of food; yet *famine* and *scarcity* hath rodd up and down this Kingdom upon her *black Horse* with a *paire of Ballances* in her hand, sometimes clad in a robe of immoderate rain and showers, drowning our Lands provision; sometimes bearing on her shoulders *Heavens of Brasse*, and treading under her feet the *Earth of Iron*: sometimes attended with *Catterpillars* innumerable, and other such like Creatures to eat up, and devour, the fruit that the Earth brought forth for our sustinance; so that we have sowed much, and brought forth little, we have seen a *measure of wheate* for a penny, and *three measures of barley* for a penny, *Rev. 6. 6.* The penny was the Labourers hire allowed for his dayes work, *Math. 20. 9.* and was as much as our twelve pence (as some think,) others conceive it to be lesse; And the *measure*

2 King. 6.  
25.

Revel. 6. 5.

Rev. 6. 6.  
Enlightened

Ma h. 20. 9.



was so much as was allowed for a Servant every day for his maintenance: now it must needs go very hard with the poor Labourer, when, having wife and Children to maintain, the wages of his dayes labour would do no more then provide Bread for his own mouth; when he shall rise early to eat the Bread of carefullnesse, and yet at night, upon his returne from his soile labour, have Bread to care for: Of such a scarcety we have lately tasted; yet, an somewhat worse then so: (albeit the extremity of Famine, which our Chronicles mention *England* hath been afflicted withal, we have not lately tasted; albeit we have deserved it;) God hath been very moderate therein, as if he had given that charge unto Famine, *The Wine and the Oyl hurt thou not: And yet we have not returned unto God.*

We being nothing battered by this scourge; *Pestilence* hath issued forth up on his Pale horse, killing with sicknesse and death *thousands and ten thousands in the streets: A Judgment* that wailes manifestes Gods wrath and heavy indignation against people, as appears, *Deut. 32. 22, 23. Numb. 16. 46. 2 Sam. 24. 1. Psal. 78. 50.* Store-houses may serve against Famine, *Gen. 41. 48, 56.* or another Country may preserve us from it, *Ruth 1. 13.* But in this contagion of the Pestilence, at home, our houses sifle us; abroad, the aire infects us: it flyeth *by night* and killeth at *noon day*, *Psal. 91. 5, 6.* It leaves the very streets of our Cities empty: Therefore (as the learned have well observed) that from that word in the Hebrew, which signifies the *Plague*, is derived another which signifies a *Desert*, for that usually where it comes, it turns the most populous City into a Desert; what slaughter? what lamentation? what horreur was there in the Mother-City of this Kingdome the last mortality (not so long since but yet fresh in many of our memories)? More then twenty thousand Families (sayth my reverend Authour) ran from their houses, as if they had been on fire over their heads, and sought shelter in *Zoar*, and the mountaines: Then was there a voyce heard in *Rama*, *lamentation and weeping; and great mourning;* the Wife wringing her hand; the distracted Mother falling into a wound whilst she kist the insensible cold lips of her breathlesse Infant; poor desolate Orphans, mourning the untimely losse of their Parents: In one place Bells heavily tolling, and ringing out in  
ano hee

Stow Chro.  
of Eng. in  
the 5. year  
of the Con-  
quer. 1069.  
3 Hen. 3.  
18:1234.  
4 Hen. 2. 9.  
16

1191. 3.  
1201. 10.  
1213. 15.  
Numb. 16.  
46.  
2 Sam. 24.  
1.  
Psal. 78. 50.  
Gen. 41.  
48. 56.  
Ruth 1. 13.  
Pl. 91. 5, 6.  
B. B. Hall  
his Sermon  
of thank-  
giving &c.  
Pl. 68. 19.  
20.

Mat. 3. 18.

another; nothing in a manner to be heard but groaning, and c. y. ing, and dying, and burying; and instead of the Traefman asking you, *What do you lack?* The *Vespillo* calls, *Who is here dead?* I shall need to say no more of this Subject, both City, and Country, know what kind of Judgment it is: They have marble bosoms that will not be shaken with these terrors, and yet it must be said of *England*, as well as of *Israel* and *Judah*, *For all this we returned not unto the Lord.*

Rev. 6.4.

Exek. 5.16

2 Sam. 24.

15.

2 Chr. 13.

17.

2 Chr. 20.

24.

Ila. 34.5,6

Explained.

And now the Lord hath lately sent forth another Pursivant, upon his red horse, (and he unbridled) and hath given power to him to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: & there hath been given to him a great sword: And the Sword is the most deadly Arrow in all God's Quiver; more terrible it is then either Famine, or Pestilence; It is as the last billow or wave; when it comes, it overwhelmes all. There may be some help by *Physick* against the *Plague*; by *Plenty* against *Famine*; by neither against the *Sword*: Look what sorrowes are in both the former, usually attends this one; nor is either of the former, so great a devourer of humane flesh, as the sword is: *Seventy thousand men*, the Pestilence did devour in *three daies* space, 2 Sam. 24. 15. but the Sword devoured *five hundred thousand chosen men* in *one day*, 2 Chron. 13. 17. No Famine so great, nor pestilence so contagious; but some escape: But the Sword is so greedy, that (if God restrain it not) it will suffer not one to escape alive, as we read 2 Chron. 20. 24. When God sends this messenger abroad God is highly displeated indeed. Read Isa. 34. 5, 6, 7. *My Sword shall be bathed in Heaven, it shall come down upon the people of my curse to Judgment*; that is, my Judgment decreed in heaven shall be fearfully executed, upon my known and professed enemies, whom I have accursed to an eternall condemnation; yet, *it shall be filled and made drunk with blood*; their land shall be so soaked with it, as that the dust of it shall be made *fat with fatnesse*: A Slaughter, that shall be like an universal Sacrifice, the matter of which Sacrifice shall be, not onely *Lambs* and *Goats*, which have no power to resist, but the *Unicorns* and *Bulls*, the most Great and Potent Personages, they shall be exposed to this bloody Oblation; so that the whole land shall be drenched in blood. This is an extraordinary warning of Vastation and Ruine, if it be not prevented



prevented; but especially if it be *civill* and *intestine* (the worst of wars). *Intestine* it is truly termed, for that it is, as a burning in the bowels and intrals; and *Civill* as unaptly, for of all wars they are most unnatural; and uncivill: here the Father fights against the Child, and the Child against the Father; Brother against Brother, and one Friend against another. We read in History, that when the Civill wars were betwixt the *Romans* themselves in the daies of *Vitellius*, (some being for him, others for *Vespasian*) that when the women brought the *Vitellians* victuals by night into the Camp, they not onely refreshed themselves, but their adversaries, with meat and drink, and each man would call upon his adversary by name, in a very friendly manner, and say *Accipe mi Commilito, ede, &c.* Come my fellow-Souldier, eat, I do not onely offer thee my Sword, but bread; take again, and drink, that whether thou slay me, or I thee, we may dye the easier, &c. Thus they greeted over night, and the next day dispatched each the other; They gave wounds, and took wounds (saith the Historian); they slew, and were slain: No wars so unfriendly, friendly, as these are.

Nor is there any warr so cruell as warr of this nature; the hatred of Brethren is most bitter when they fall out. *A Brother offended is harder to win than a strong City* (saith Solomon), and *their contentions are as the barr of a Castle*, Prov. 18. 19. Kinsmen or Friends displeased, by any offence, or estranging themselves upon injuries offered, resist all intreaties of peace, and means of reconciliation, more stoutly and stiffly then a defended town doth the assaults of the weapon, or the embassies which intreat for peace; and there is many times as much yielding in the iron barrs of a strong Castle, (when they are thrust against.) as there is in the hearts of Brethren, when they are pressed to peace, they are implacable; and when they come to joyn issue, most cruell and Tyger-like: You have an example hereof in the *Israelites* against the *Benjaminites*; Judg. 20. 48. who, when they had conquered them, did not only kill every man they met withall, but they killed *every Beast, and all that came to hand* (saith the Text), also they set on fire all the Cities that they came to. The strife betwixt Brethren concerning things of this World, is very fierce; but when it ariseth about matters of Religion, then

Ezek. 14.  
17.  
Isa. 9. 18,  
19, 20.

Dio. in vit.  
Vitel.

Pro. 18. 19  
Explained.

Jud. 20. 48

Turk Hist.

Dr. Lawrence Ser.  
or 1 Cor.  
1. 12.Godwins  
Annals p.  
230.

are their contentions most bitter and durable. The *Persians* and *Turks* are both *Mahometans*, and yet disagreeing about some small poynts, in the Interpretation of their *Alchoran*, the *Persians* burn whatsoever Books they find of the *Turkish* Sect; and the *Turks* hold it more meritorious to kill one *Persian*, than Seventy *Christians*. Theologicall hatreds (as oneer neth them) are most bitter hatreds, and are carryed on (for the most part) with *Cain*-like rage: & bloody opposition: The higher the place is from whence a stone doth fall, the more dangerous is the blow; no wounds so mortall as that of a Thunderbolt: So of all other those hatreds which make pretences unto Heaven, and which arise from Motives of the highest nature, are ever most desperate. Men think their Souls engaged in one Quarrell; their Fortunes onely in another. He that drawes for Religion, strikes with a Razor; the other thrusts with a foile: When a Battail is fought by the Sword of the Lord and of Gideon, then it ever proceeds with greatest cruelty. Insurrection and Rebellion never prove so loud and dangerous as when Religion is pretended: The first noise is for the liberty of the People, when that is but as the *Out-works*; But when the Soul is pretended, that is like the *Maine fort*. Thence it is, that the cause of Religion is the constant pretence of all discontented Persons; And then, *In nomine Domini*, the wheels of all their rebellious actions are moved more forcibly; To the truth of this I suppose if you were called unto it, you cannot but subscribe.

How happy had this Nation been, if we would have taken warning by those lesser Judgments that did forerun this? so should we never have been able, by wofull experience, to confesse it to be true. (otherwise then by hear-say). But as flies hovering about the Candle, will not be warned by the burning of one wing, but must needs sacrifice their bodies in those flames. So it is with all obdurate sinners; *Pharaoh* by one Plague, lost the fruit of the Earth; by another, the fruit of his Castell; by a third, the light of his eyes; by a fourth, the fruit of his loynes; even all the first borne of *Egypt*: yet he would take no warning, but went on in his Stubbornesse, whilst his breath was left in his body. God forbid that we should be like *Pharaoh* therein, for then Affliction shall not rise up a second time, Nah. 1. 9.

Nah. 1. 9.

And



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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And thus we have had seven remarkable warnings, wherein we come but little short of the warnings which *Jerusalem* had, before her overthrow. Woe, Woe, unto us if we take none.

I shall spare to speak of those speciall and particular Notifications of God's displeasure, against every particular Person of us; every losse, every crosse that befalls us, is a warning, and hath a voyce with it, *Job* 33. 14. *Psal.* 2. 5. *Mich.* 6. 9. *the man of wisdom will hear the red and who hath appointed it*; the Lord give us that wisdom, that we may so do, and not rush on desperately against the *Angell's Sword*, which stands in the way to stop us in our sinfull courses.

*Job* 33. 14.  
*Psal.* 2. 5.  
*Mich.* 6. 9.

I shall end this Poynt, with putting you in mind of that which our Saviour speaks to the Pharisees; *When the Sky is red and lowring, you say it will be fowle weather to day: Ye Hypocrites, you can discern the face of the Sky, but can you not discern the Signes of the times?* Our Sky is yet red and lowring, and he is a senselesse and secure Hypocrite (saith a very judicious Divine) that doth not expect some great storm and tempest. And how can we expect other; considering how little good use we have made of former warnings? God will not cease perusing men with his Judgments, one in the neck of another, till the *Traitor's head* be thrown over the Wall: not can we imagine, that the last blow will be lighter than the former: Heavier things will befall us than yet we have felt, it may be justly feared.

*Mat.* 16. 3.

*Mr. Hild on*  
*Psal.* 5. 1.  
*Leff.* 5.

*2 Sam.* 22.  
22.

But can a heavier Judgment befall us, than hath already? Have we not heard, that the Sword is the worst of Plagues (especially when it is in our own bowels) that can befall a People?

*Quest.*

It is so compared with any other, singly considered; but yet it may so happen, that all those Horrid men, *Famine, Pestilence, Sword*, may enter upon us altogether, as they did upon the City of *Jerusalem*; and I will not that be worke than what we have yet felt? This, this, is that Judgment that we have great cause to fear; They being threatned to be inflicted together, upon a people, for those very provocations that we are guilty of, in a very high degree; as *Disobedience to God* *Jer.* 42. 13. — 18. *Wandering from God* *Jer.* 14. 10, 11, 12. *Not hearkning to his Word*,

*Resp.*

*Jer.* 42. 13,  
— 18. &  
14. 10, 11,  
12.

& 29. 17,  
18, 19.  
Levit. 26.  
24. 25. 26.  
2 Sam. 24.  
2, 13.  
1 Chr. 21.  
12.

Jer. 29. 17, 18, 19. *Incorrigibleness*, Levit. 26. 24, 25, 26. *Confidence in the Arm of flesh*, 2 Sam. 24. 2, 13. 1 Chron. 21. 12. Now the Lord in mercy awaken us, that we may prevent these miseries, and the Severity of the Sentence in my Text, which now comes to be spoken of.

*Cut it down.*]

Dan. 4. 10,  
11.

Job 14. 7,  
8, 9.

A soar and severe Sentence! There is nothing more terrible (saith *Chrysostome*) than this manner of speaking. He threatneth not, that he will come with a Hook to prune it, nor that he will tread down the hedge: that was about the Vineyard; but he threatens the Axe, which is more terrible: Had the boughes been doomed to have been rent, or lopped, and the leaves to be shaken off, and scattered, so that it might yield no shelter, nor shadow, to the Fowles of Heaven, or Beasts of the field, (which was the Sentence past upon the Tree which *Nebuchadnezar* saw in his Vision, Dan. 4. 10, 11, 12,) the doom had not been so dreadfull. The Tree that is pruned and lopped may yet stand; and that which is rent and torne may yet recover, and live to recompence its former deficiency, Job 14. 7, 8, 9. But when it is stubbed, and cut up by the roots, down falls all, both Boughes and Body: Of such a nature is the Judgment denounced against this Figg-Tree. [*Cut it down.*]

In which Sentence, take notice, First, of the *Act*; Secondly, of the *Object*. The *Act* [*Abscinde*, Cut down;] The *Object* [*It*] that is, the Figg-Tree before made mention of. From the *Act* observe we, that

*Doct.*

*Abscission, and cutting down, is the doom of an Hypocritical & barren Profession.*

Mat. 3. 10.

And now also the *Axe* is layd to the root of the Trees, (saith *John the Baptist*,) therefore every Tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewen down, and cast into the fire, Math. 3. 10. Which speech, albeit specially directed to the Sadduces and Pharisees, and concerned the Jewish State, which was the Tree that should be cut down by the Romans (as it afterwards was) by the very root; insomuch that their Temple, their Ceremonies, their Laws, their Civill Power, their Common wealth, were utterly destroyed and overthrown: yet it is not to be restrained unto them only; but *communitatione*, and in a general consideration, it is intended



ded against all evill and hypocriticall Professors, all unfruitfull Christians (whatsoever), such as they were.

And lest we might think that *John* the Baptist, whose Doctrine suited with the Garments he wore (which were rough and hairy), meant this onely against that generation of Vipers which came unto his Ministry & were so severely reprov'd by him, our blessed Saviour himself useth the same denunciation, *Every Tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewen down and cast into the fire* Math. 7. 19. [*Every Tree*,] without exception of any, [*that bringeth not forth good fruit*] not bad fruit onely, [*Is hewen down*] not, shall be; it is as certain, as if it were already done. This the mouth of Truth it self hath spoken. The Axe of God's vengeance shall do execution upon every barren and fruitlesse Tree, standing in the Vineyard of the Lord, be it never so high, nor never so low, *Tribulation and anguish shall be upon every Soul* that lives in an Hypocritical and barren profession, *John 15. 2. Heb. 6. 8.*

Mat. 7. 19.

Joh. 15. 2.  
Heb. 6. 8.

Something for Explication of the Poynt, before we come to the Application of it: First, what is meant by this *Cutting down*, which the Text speaks of: Secondly, what *Instrument* God useth in cutting down a barren Figg-Tree: Thirdly, the *manner* of *God's proceeding* in the cutting of it down, shall be shewed. For the First,

This *Cutting* is nothing else but the *sitting* and *preparing* of it for future vengeance; As the Tree that is felled is fited thereby and prepared for some use, either for building or burning; Rotten Trees and barren Trees (especially such as the Vine and Figg-Tree), are not (we know) for building, but for the fire; So Hypocritical and barren Professours are prepared for destruction, *Rom. 9. 22.* They are made meet and *fitted* before hand for it; which is done, partly in respect of *their own sin*; and so they are of themselves *apta*, fit for it, through the corruption of their own nature, and malice of Sathan, solliciting them to sin, and inspiring into them sinful motions; and partly by *God*, who in just judgment for that pravity which is in them, rejects them, and justly hardens them for resisting of his Will, and so they are *apata*, fitted for future vengeance.

Rom. 9. 22

The *Means* or *Instrument* which God useth in cutting down a barren Tree, is of two sorts; *Corporal* or *Spiritual*, the Outward and Corporal Instrument is, his Judgments inflicted on mens Bodies or Estates. These are of a cutting nature, as appears, *Psal. 75. 10. The horns of the wicked* (saith the Prophet) *shall be cut off*; And God threatens *Eli* that he would *cut off his arme, and the arme of his Fathers House*, 1 Sam. 2. 31, 33. So, *Isa. 9. 14.* And, *Jer. 25. 37.* And in this respect *Babylon* is said to be *God's Axe*, yea, His *battail-Axe*, (which is sharp and destructive) for that he used them as his Instruments to punish his People.

The Inward and Spiritual kind of cutting down, is by the Ministry of the Word; of which we read, *Hos. 6. 5. &c. I have hewed them down by the Prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth.* The word of God in the mouths of his Ministers, is sharp and cutting; It is as it were an *Axe* in Gods hand, as, *Math. 3. 10. Now is the Axe laid to the Root of the Tree.* Where, by *Axe* is commonly understood *John's Ministry*, whereby those who resorted to him were so cut, as that thereby their Salvation or Damnation was furthered, (albeit some understand thereby not the Gospel, but the Judgments that afterwards did befall that People; but better (in my opinion) they, who by *Axe* understood both); So it is compared to a *Sword*, *Ephes. 6. 17. to a sharp Sword, Isa. 49. 2. to a Sword with two edges, Rev. 1. 16. in respect* (saith *Austin*) *of the two Testaments*: and it is said to be *sharper then any two edged Sword, Heb. 4. 12. it peirceth more speedily and throughly, and is of a more cutting nature, for it peirceth even to the dividing asunder of the Soul and Spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, which no other Sword can do. *David* said of *Goliath's Sword* *None to it*; But, *None* to this may we truly say. What Sword under Heaven can cut like this? That the word doth cut is manifested by experience (as well as Scripture): hence it is that whilst we are opening, and applying of the Scripture, some rage and fret at it. So the chief Priests and Council, upon the Apostles Preaching were *cut to the heart*, *Acts 5. 33.* And *St. Stephens* hearers are said to be *cut to the heart*, when they heard those things which he taught, insomuch that they gnashed upon him

Psal. 75.

10.

1 Sam. 2.

31, 33.

Isa. 9. 14.

Jer. 25. 37.

Jer. 51. 20.

Hos. 6. 5.

Mat. 3. 10.

Psalms

Com. is

Mat. 3. 10.

Eph. 6. 17.

Isa. 49. 2.

Rev. 1. 16.

Heb. 4. 12.

1 Sam. 21.

9.

Acts 5. 33.



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him with their teeth, *Acts 7. 54.* And we find day ie, how men of corrupt mindes storm and frer at that they hear delivered, when they find it come to the quick: It cuts the Swearer, the Adulterer, the Drunkard, the Oppresser, the Slanderer to the very heart, to hear their sins discovered, and Gods Judgments denounced against them: And the good find it to be sharp and cutting (as well as the bad); it hewes them, and squares them, frames and fashions them, that they may be made fit for God's Building, (which is the Church) and so become true Parts and Members of it; So those that heard *Peter*, were *pricked in their hearts* upon the hearing of his Doctrine; they were peiced as with so many Daggers, and not being able to endure the pain, they cryed out, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do,* *Acts 2. 37.* This is the Spiritual or inward cutting of the Figg-Tree. In this Parabolical speech God cutteth down both wayes; In reference to the Estate and Politie of the Jews, he threatens the cutting of them down by his Judgments, which afterwards beset them: In reference to barren Christians, it hath a more spiritual meaning according to that, *John 15. 2, 6.* Every Branch that beareth not fruit, He taketh away, that is, He cutteth off from Christ and from the Benefits of Christ, and so casts him forth as a *branch that is withered.*

*Acts 7. 54.*

*1 Cor. 3. 9.*  
*Eph. 2. 20,*  
*21, 22.*

*Acts 2. 37.*

*John 15.*  
*2, 6.*

And that is the third thing to be considered, the manner of God's proceeding in the Abcission or cutting down of a barren Figg-Tree, and that is *Gradually by Degrees.* A Tree is not felled by one blow, but by many blows it falls; So did the Jewish Nation and Synagogue; First, Christ *threatened* them, and denounced many woes against them for their Hypocrisie, *Math. 23.* He foretold their ruine, and by whom it shou'd be, *Luke 19. 41.* Then He *curst* them, and manifested that curse that lay upon them, by the *Figg-Tree* which He spied in the way, *Math. 21. 18.* Then, at his Death, He *smote* them at the *Root*, so that the Tree withered at the heart, as the Disciples observed in the Figg-Tree (before mentioned). After this the Apostles preached amongst them; but being despised and persecuted, they returned to the Gentiles, *Acts 13. 46.* here the *Tree was laid*; And forty years after the Ascension the *Romans* came and destroyed the City, and burnt the Temple, here the Tree was dragged to the fire. And thus by Degrees was the Jewish Figg-Tree cut down and destroyed.

*Math. 23.*  
*Luke 19.*  
*41.*  
*Mat. 21.*  
*18.*

*Acts 13.*  
*46.*

If

Joh. 15. 6.

If we consider this Judgment in reference to all barren and unfruitful Christians, now living under the Gospel; our Saviour, *John 15. 6.* doth excellently set it forth, *If a man abide not in me, that is, if he be only profess'dly in me, and bears not fruit, or else revolts from me; He is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned:* Where, observe the degrees of a barren professors ruine: First, they are *cast out*; Secondly, upon that they *wither*, Thirdly, upon their withering, they are *gathered*, or bound up together; Fourthly, upon their gathering they are *cast into the fire*; Fifthly, being cast into the fire they are *burned up*, and consumed.

Heb. 6. 8.

First, They are *cast out and rejected*; This is it St. Paul speaks of, Heb. 6. 8. *that which bears Thornes and Bryars is rejected*; as the Husbandman gives over labouring a piece of barren ground, that will take no mending. This casting forth is either by God or Men, *God casts such forth* two wayes, First, *Subtrahendo*, by withholding the means that should do such a man good; whether *Outward*, as his Word and Ordinances, *Isa. 5. 5, 6.* *Amos 8. 11.* *Hos. 4. 14.* He will prune them no more, bestow no more labour upon them; And, *Isa. 1. 5.* *Why should you be smitten any more?* Or *Inward* withholding from them his special grace and favour; His Spirit shall no longer strive with them, *Gen. 6. 3.* that is, by those checks and knocks which in former times they had, and which accompanied the preachings and pains of my Servants which I have sent unto them: So, *Isa. 6. 10.* *Math. 13.* applied to them.

Isa. 5. 5, 6.

Amos 8.

11.

Hos. 4. 14.

Isa. 1. 5.

Gen. 6. 3.

Isa. 6. 10.

Math. 13.

Psal. 81.

12.

Rom. 1. 24.

2 Cor. 4. 4.

Rev. 2. 2.

11.

Rom. 1.

28, 29.

Secondly, *Tradendo*, by giving such a one up, so that he will own him no more; when God comes to give a man up, either to himself (as, *Psal. 81. 12.* and, *Rom. 1. 24*) or to Sathan to be further blinded (as, *2 Cor. 4. 4.*) this is a Fearful kind of casting forth; then God seems to say of such a one. *A beat, percat, profundat, perdat*, let him go on and perish; *He that is filthy let him be more filthy*; then it follows that a man will be filled with all manner of unrighteousnesse, (as the beggar is with Vermine). So, *Rom. 1. 28, 29.* when the Fense is broken down, all Beasts will come in, and every base lust will be a Commoner in that heart. Thus God casts forth such barren and unfruitful branch-  
And



And as God casts them forth, so they come to be *cast out* by men, even by the Church and Members of it; sometimes more *publicly*, as when a man falling into some grosse and vicious course of life, is cast out of the Visible Church and delivered up to *Sathan* by the censure of excommunication, as, *1 Cor. 5. 5. 1 Tim. 1. 20.* This is a soare censure, and the searest that the Church can inflict (as formerly hath bin shewed you). Then man is left to be a lodge for Devils; Then lusts and all wastful sins enter into the heart, till such a one be restored again by true Repentance.

*1 Cor. 5. 5.  
1 Tim. 1. 20.*

Sometimes more *secretly* and *privately*, they are cast out of the hearts of Gods people; and that two wayes, first, when they desire not the acquaintance of such a fruitlesse and barren branch; They delight not in his company, but shun it rather, (as *St. John* did the company of *Cerintus* in the Bath, or) as one doth the company of an infested person; *With such a one eat not* (saith the Apostle); have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; This is a very sad and uncomfortable kind of casting forth (especially if it be general).

*1 Cor. 5. 11.  
2 Thes. 3. 14.*

Secondly When they are cast out of their prayers: God locking up the hearts of his Children, so that they do not so much as remember them; or withdrawing the spirit of prayer from his Children, so as that they cannot heartily solícite God on their behalf, (albeit they are desired); God seeming to say to his Children (as he saith by his Prophet, *Hos. 4. 4.* Let none reprove them, so) Let none pray for them. Thus God forbad *Samuel* to pray for *Saul*, *1 Sam. 16. 1.* and so *Jeremiah* for the *Jewes*, *Jer. 7. 16.* We have not the like *Inhibition*, nor may we forbear to pray for any particular person, (unlesse we are sure he hath sinned against the Holy Ghost); yet God withholdeth the spirit of prayer many times; so that the godly cannot pray heartily for a dissembling professor. And this is the first degree of the barren Christian's doom, whereby it is executed; the *casting of him forth* both by *God and Man*.

*Hos. 4. 4.*

*1 Sam. 16. 1.  
Jer. 7. 16.*

The second degree mentioned by our Saviour is *withering* and this must needs follow upon the former; for how can that branch but wither that receives no Life, or Sap, from Him that gives the life of sap to all? So the stony ground, *Luke 8. 6.* withered

*Luke 8. 6.*

away

away because it *lacked moisture*. This withering is *Three fold*.

First, They wither in their *Judgments*, whereas they had their minds in some measure enlightened to see and acknowledge the Truth of Religion, distaste Errors, discern, acknowledge, and approve that which is the Truth in Jesus Christ; Now they fall away from that Truth they have professed, *unto another Gospel*, as did the *Galathians*, Gal. 1. 6. and, with *Hymenæus* and *Philetus*, *err concerning the Faith*, 1 Tim. 2. 18. They held the Truth concerning the Resurrection; but they fell from that Truth, saying, the *Resurrection was past already*, and so destroyed the Faith of many.

Secondly, They wither in their *Affections*, falling away from their *first love*, as did the Church of *Ephesus*, Rev. 2. 4. and the Church of *Galatia* whom the Apostle upbraided for that strange coolness in their affections to his Person and Ministry, whereas at the first their zeal was such, as that they were willing to *pull out their eyes* to do Him service, Gal. 4. 15, 18. They withered in respect of that zeal and fervency of spirit for God and goodness, that formerly they had; As old men that are withering, grow cold and chilly, and abate of their heat and vigour, which formerly they had in their strength and youth; They have not that appetite to the word, nor delight in the society of the Saints as in former times; They can well digest what formerly they could not, and content themselves in an indifferent neutrality; and frame themselves to such a formaliry, as will best comply with the times, and no further.

Thirdly, They wither in their *Practise* (as did the *Galathians* before mentioned, Chap. 3. 3. they *began in the spirit, but did end in the flesh*; they *ran well* for a time, but *gave over* obeying of the Truth, Chap. 5. 7.) So is it with these; Their obedience falls off, (like leaves in Autumn,) and whereas formerly they seemed watchful of their wayes, conscientious of their Duties, (Private and Publique); now the Case is altered with them, they are not like the men that formerly they seemed to be. Such is their withering.

Thirdly, Being thus withered, they are *collected and gathered together*; men gather them saith our Saviour: There is a *Two-fold*



fold gathering; One in this life, the other afterwards. *In this life*, these barren and unfruitful branches are gathered; and that first, *by Sathan*, Secondly, by his *Instruments*: so soon as ever God leaves, Sathan finds, and gathers such hypocritical and un-  
sound professors into his fold, by his temptations; As the Lord of the soyl seizeth on all waists and strays, and sets his brand upon them; so doth the God of this World; Thus the Devil entered into *Judas* after his receiving and eating of the sop, *John*  
13. 27. not as if he had not entered into him before, but (it may be) he had not branded him before. Now he took a further and stronger possession of him, entering in with seven spirits worse then himself.

*Joh. 13.  
27.*

And as they are gathered (immediately) by Sathans temptations, so likewise by his *Agents and Instruments*. The *Scribes and Pharisees compassed both Sea and Land*, *Math. 23. 15.* to  
*make one of their profession*; As the Jesuits do at this day, and *Seſtaries*; who gather up all such as wither in their Judgments, and grow cold in their Affections. *There are many false Spirits gone abroad into the World* (saith *St. John*, 1 *Epist.* 4. 1.) *Sedu-*  
*cing Teachers, and Sect-Masters*; who privily bring in damnable *heresies* (saith *St. Peter*, 2 *Epist.* 2. 1.) These gather all withered branches into their snares and nets, and by fair speech make  
*Merchandize of their Souls*, (as the Apostle shews, 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. 2 *Tim.* 3. 6.) Thus they are gathered up in this life.

*Mat. 13. 15.*

1 *Joh. 4. 1.*

2 *Pet. 2. 1.*

2 *Tim. 4.*

1.

2 *Tim. 3. 6.*

There is likewise a gathering of them up *after this life*; Both at the *Day of Death*, and at the *Day of Judgment*. At the *Day of Death*, *Gather not up my soul* (saith *David*) *amongst sinners, nor my life with bloody men*, *Psal. 26. 9.* So, that there is a *Penn or Fold* for the *Souls* of the wicked, after they are delivered out of their *Bodies*, appears, *Luke 16. 28.* *Psal. 9. 17.* And for their *Bodies*; they shall be gathered together in the grave to their kindred, (worms and corruption): men gather them, and carry them to it, as, *Acts 5. 6, 10.*

*Psal. 26. 9.*

*Luke 16.*

28.

*Psal. 9. 17*

*Act. 5. 6,*

10.

At the *Day of Judgment* there shall be a General and an Universal gathering; but that shall be made not by men, but by the *Angels*, *Math. 13. 30.* The Tares must be gathered together and bound up in bundles, or faggots; Not all knit into One, but severall faggots (as *Austin* expoundeth it). The Adulterer and

*Math. 13.*

30.

this Aulterresse shall make one faggot, the Thief and the Receiver another, Drunkards shall be bound up with Drunkards, and Lyars with Lyars, &c. Which binding up together is not onely to assure them of all disability any way to help themselves, but for the further encrease of their torment; for as sticks and straws being bound together, serve but to set one the other on fire, and encrease the flame; so will it be in this case, for they are thus gathered and bound not to be spared, but to be prepared for the fire; which is

The fourth degree of the barren Tree's misery, *And cast them into the fire.* There is a gathering and binding up of the wheat, as well as of the tares; of fruitful Professors, as well as of barren Christians; but for several ends: the Wheat is gathered and bound to be Inned, and carryed into the Barne; but the Tares are for the flame and fire; the most terrible of all tortures, *Math. 13. 40.* In this life they may be said to be cast into the fire, when they are cast into the hot fire of affliction, or taken away by some soare and heavy Judgment; and so God's wrath is often compared to fire, *Isa. 31. 9. Lament. 2. 4, & 4. 11.* and the wicked to stubble fully dry, which fire doth suddenly consume, *Nah. 1. 10.* But this fire is but Temporal: There is fire eternal and unquenchable, into which they shall be cast, *Math. 3. 12.* All that they suffer here is nothing to that which abides them at the last Day; in comparison of which all other fires are but as painted fires, in respect of Violence and Durance.

The fifth degree is *burning*, Men cast them into the fire, and they are burned. St. Paul speaks of some that are cast into the fire and so saved, *1 Cor. 3. 15.* He shall be saved as it were through fire: And David of such, as through fire and water were brought into a wealthy place, *Psal. 66. 12.* But this fire is of another nature; and into this fire they are cast for another end; to burn and fry for ever in those quenchlesse flames. And this is the Catastrophe of the barren Figg-Tree's Tragedy, as you have it, *Heb. 6. 8.* And thus you have heard by what degrees God is pleased to cut such Trees down, and bring them to utter destruction: Now we come to make some Application to our selves of what hath bin delivered.

*Math. 13.  
40.  
Psal. 18. 7,  
8.  
Heb. 12.  
39.  
Isa. 31. 9.  
Lament. 2.  
4, & 4. 11.  
Nah. 1.  
10.  
Mat. 3. 11.*

*1 Cor. 3.  
15.  
Psal. 66.  
12.*

*Heb. 6. 8.*



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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This that hath bin said of the point, may informe us concerning the present estate and condition of this Nation; Never any people under heaven have abounded with that plenty of means (as hath bin before shewed); nor did ever any Nation bring forth lesse fruit, that hath enjoyed the like means. What the Prophet *Zephaniah* saith of the Inhabitants of the Sea coasts, and the Region of *Canaan*, *The word of the Lord is against you*, may be said to us; and that is more then if all the People of the World were against us. Better it were that Emperour, Pope, Spaine, France, were all against us, then that the word of the Lord should be against us. And that it is apparently against us, for our barrennesse and sinful abominations, hath bin shewed. There are certain spiritual weapons which God hath put into the hands of his Ministers of the word, not onely for the Building up of the Church, but likewise for the destroying and subverting of whatsoever, and whomsoever shall oppose the Kingdom of Christ, according to that which God speaks to *Jeremiah*. 1. 10. *I have this day set thee over the Nations, and over the Kingdoms to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to Build, and to Plant*; that is, I have given thee a Commission to deliver my messages, concerning the destroying and rooting out, the planting and establishing of the Dominions and Sovereignties of the Nations on the Earth; And what his Prophets and Faithfull Servants do, by vertue of their Ministerial function, God will own as done by himself; their regular proceedings God will back and make good in due time; And these weapons which God hath put into the hands of his Ministers, are in a readinesse (saith the Apostle) *to revenge all disobedience*; that is, to take just vengeance upon all such persons, as after they have professed the Gospel of Christ, run out into flagitious courses, and bring not forth fruit answerable to the profession which they make of Christ; Nor may we doubt, but that Vengeance is every whit as ready in God's hand, as in the Minister's mouth. Now who sees not how busie Gods Ministers are in every Congregation with these weapons? Who hears not the blows that are given with their Axes and Hammers? the fearful denunciations and threatenings that are pronounced against this Land and Nation, for her filthy abominations, her deadnesse, rottennesse, and bar-

*Use 1.*

*Zeph. 2. 5.*

*1 Cor. 10. 4. 5.*

*Jer. 1. 10.*

*Hos. 6. 5.*

*1 Cor. 10. 6. Enlightend.*

*Acts 5. 5. 10.*

2 Cor. 14.

24.

Ezek. 22.

2.

Psal. 36. 2.

2 Chron.

26. 8.

rennesse? Nor a Minifter that we hear but is chopping at the Root; so that it may be truly said, *we are judged of all, and condemned of all*; and to judged, as that we cannot choose but see our hollownesse and rottennesse; yet we remain without remorse, and blesse our selves in our wicked wayes, *till our iniquity be found to be hateful*; and found it will be, to be so, both by God and Men; when the Tree is laid, then the unsoundnesse of it will be seen (if not before) as was *Jehoiakims* doings, and that *which was found in him*: that is, (say some) the marks and prints of his forceries, which was found in his Body after he was dead.

Nor hath the Ministerial Axe onely bin at work; (in hacking and hewing at the Root of this English Figg-Tree) for so long a time; But God himself hath taken the Axe into his own hand (as it is his usual manner when his Ministers can do little good with their Axe, or grow weary at their work): he hath hewed us with his Outward and Temporal Judgments, (as hath bin shewed you in the former doctrine); and needs must be senselesse, and secure, that is not sensible hereof. For about whose ears do not the Chips flye? who hath not in one kind or other, felt them, and lyen groaning under them, yet the Figg-Tree stands; but it reels and totters shrewdly; it is in a consuming, withering, and dying condition (to every discerning eye,) both in Judgment, Affection, and Practise.

Our Saviour foretelling the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and of the whole State, amongst other signes forerunning their ruine, gives this for one, *Many false Prophets shall arise and shall deceive many*. Mat. 24. 11.

Math. 24.

21.

The many Sects and errors that arise in our Church, the many new and strange opinions which are held and maintained, (some of them fantastical, others blasphemous; all contrary to sound Doctrine) is to be esteemed not onely as a just Judgment of God upon us for our contempt of the Gospel, and our not retaining the Truth in Love, but as a fearful forerunner of a more grievous Judgment approaching, even the removing of our Candlestick, and taking away the Gospel from us. God commonly (with a noted Divine) moves the Candle before He removes it; the light seems sick and faint, before it dyes; As in Mines before

1 Thes. 2.

II, 12.

Mr. Tho:

Fuller in

his Sermon.

preached at

Exeter, on

Revel. 2. 5.



before a damp cometh, Candles begin to burn blew, (as by Instinct) mourning their own Funeral before hand: And sure y, these false Teachers encreasing as they do, will steal away from us the Truth of our Religion, (as God speaketh of false Prophets, *Jer. 23. 30.*) before we are aware, unlesse we lay faster hold on it then we do; for our eyes see that abundantly verified in a great number of Professors, which was foretold of these latter times; *they have departed from the Faith, and given heed to seducing spirits and doctrine of Devils, 1 Tim. 4. 1.* they have fallen off from the grounds of sincerity and truth, whereof they were once perswaded. This makes us more odious to God then many fowle corruptions in life and conversation wou'd do, especially where the mind hath bin enlightned with the knowledge of the Truth: *Leprosie in the head* was of all other Leprosies most dangerous and destructive. The Priest shall pronounce him *utterly unclean*, (saith the Lord) *his plague is in his head, Levit. 13. 44.* The Leper was unclean, if the Leprosie was in his Hands or Feet; but if it were in the Head, then he was *utterly unclean*; Many are of opinion, that if a man's life and conversation be honest and fair, it is no great matter of what Judgment he be in matters of Religion, but they are much mistaken; *Errors of Judgment* are more pernicious then *errors of Practice*, albeit lesse regarded: The corruption of the mind is the highest degree of corruption that can be, that doth not onely *defile the Soul*, and make it loathsome unto God, *2 Cor. 21. 3. Tit. 1. 15.* but it *bewitcheth the Soul*; *Gal. 3. 1.* and brings us under a most heavy curse, *Rom. 1. 28.* which curse thousands in these dayes lye under.

As there is an evident withering in Judgment, so is there in our Affections; And this our Saviour joynes with the former, *Mt. 24. 12.* *The love of many shall wax cold*; And, this withering is not to be seen in a few onely, here one, and there another; but it is Epidemical, the disease of the whole Nation. and every Congregation in it. If ever any Church might be charged as *Ephesus* was, with leaving and forsaking her first Love, It is this Church in *England* which is fallen from that heat and zeal for God, and his Truth which once it had: *Tim.* was, when it burnt in Spirit against superstition, prophaneesse, Blasphemy

*Jer. 23. 30.*

*1 Tim. 4. 1.*

Hilderf.  
com. on  
*Psal. 41.*  
*Lev. 13. 44.*  
*Levit. 13.*

*B. B. Hall*  
*Obser. 51.*

*2 Cor. 11.*  
*3.*  
*Tim. 1. 15.*  
*Gal. 3. 1.*  
*Rom. 1.*  
*28.*

*Mt. 24.*  
*12.*

*Rev. 2. 4.*

Isa. 2. 3.

Numb. 12.  
3. 6.2 Tim. 3.  
5.Breidenb.  
decan. Moz.  
Ecclef. in  
sua peregr.  
Hist.

Blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, Whoredome, &c. but now the sway of the times, hath bin as water cast upon the coals of *Englands* affections: What flocking hath here bin in former times unto the preaching of the Word? What inciting and encouraging one another, *Come let us go up to the House of the Lord*, Isa. 2. 3. How many miles would men travaile to hear a Sermon, how precious was the Gospel in mens esteem? But our long enjoyment of it hath made us esteem it lightly, and to grow weary of it (as *Israel* did of Manna) intomuch that the Cucumbers, Onyons, and Garlick of *Egypt*, is preferred before it: Time was, when our greatest delight seemed to be in the society of the Saints, now we affect it not; nay, we rather disaffect them who are truly godly, and look aquint upon them.

Lastly, For our practise; that of the Apostle, 2 Tim. 3. 5. is verified of our times, *we have a form of godliness*, an outward profession we make of it, but *the power thereof* is denied: Prophanesse and Irreligion doth every where encrease; *Iniquity doth abound*, which is the cause that *the love of many is waxen cold*. One complains thus against Romish transgression, *Recessit hoc tempore Lex à Sacerdotibus*, &c. Change but the name, the Complaint lyes against us, The Law is departed from the Priest, Justice from the Princes, Counsel from Senators; Fidelity from People, Piety from Parents, Duty from Subjects, Charity from Prelates, Honesty from young men, Discipline from Clerks, Learning from Teachers, and Study from Schollars; Equity from Judges, and Concord from Citizens, Fear from Servants, Fellowship from the Country, Vertue from Nobility, Truth from Merchants, Chastity from Virgins, Humility from Widdows, Love from the Married, and Patience from the Poor: Those ever honoured, Moral Vertues, Patience, Constancy, Fidelity, Chastity, and the rest, are all become bare names amongst us: We have readd of them in Books, that once they were, but we cannot see them now in practise amongst men; such is our withering.

And is not this an evident signe of our *casting forth*, and rejection (as being a People of Gods curse, Isa. 34. 5)? David lamented the Churches condition, when they saw not *their signes*, Psal.



**Psal. 74. 9.** that is, the Testimonies of God's presence and favour in his Ordinances, which were for signes to *Israel*, **Gen. 17. 11.** **Exod. 12. 13, & 31; 13.** And have not we like matter of complaint? The outward signes remain with us still, (blessed be his name); The word is sincerely taught; Sacraments (in many places) duly administred, (albeit therein is a great want) but His lively and powerly presence in those Ordinances, to the converting of People unto God (which in former times we have seen and heard of) is wanting. It was sad with *Saul*, and a soar signe it was, that God was angry with him, and was purposed to cast him off, when in his extremitie he answered him not; So it is with that People, to whom God continueth his outward Ordinances, but without Power, Life, and Spirit.

Werethere not a casting of us forth, it could not be, that there should be such a collecting and gathering up of many through Sathans temptations; false Prophets seducements; and the allurements of this sinful World; whereby it comes to passe that men are drawn away from following of Christ, and bound up into so many severall bundles as there are societies of Sectaries.

All which being considered, we have great cause to lament our present condition, and by our tears to endeavour to quench the fire which is kindled against us; otherwise we must expect to be cast into it in the end, to our eternal ruine; for that is a fire not to be quenched.

But as this concerns our Nition in general, so give me leave to come nearer to you, that lye in your rotten hypocrisie, and continue barren and unfruitful under the meanes of grace; You hear your *Doom*, and may here read your Sentence, *Cut it down.*

It is true (that one saith) *Filius Populi* hath no Father, every Publique Reproof is looked upon as a Bastard, none will own it till it be brought home, and layd at his own door: Let me therefore come nearer home, and perswade every one particularly to deal truly and impartially with his own soul, in examining whether he be a fruitful, or a barren Figg-Tree, (as hath bin before directed) and if in case thou find thy self to be either barren or unfruitful in good works, or fruitful in evil, delude

**Psal. 74. 9.**  
**Gen. 17.**

**11.**  
**Exod. 12.**  
**13, & 31,**  
**13.**

**1 Sam. 28.**  
**6.**

*Use 2.*

nor thy self in thinking that thou shalt do well enough in the End; for there is a *sharp Axe* and a *quick fire* that God hath already prepared for such, and for all such unfruitful and barren Pretensions.

Eccles. 8.  
11.  
Explained.

It is true that *Solomon* tells us *Because sentence against an evil worker is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the Sons of men is fully set in them to do evil*, Eccles. 8. 11. Which words I find two wayes expounded; *Actively* thus, The wicked hold on in doing evil because their punishment is deferred; *Passively* thus, We see that such as go on in sin, go on unpunished, and hereupon they cease from doing well: but the *Sentence* is given already against such, the *Execution* onely is deferred; the sentence is a sentence of condemnation; published and declared; A sentence not concealed, but made publicquely known, (as the Original hath it) that none may plead ignorance of it, and that (if it be possible) Repentance may prevent it; But instead of making that Use of God's patience and forbearance, the heart of the sons of men is fully set to do evil: *Of the sons of men*; that is, (saith one) Of them, who are nourished in carnal sensuality, and are the sons of men, and not the sons of God (for they improve it better); but the heart of the sons of men turneth all to an encrease of wickednesse.

Lyra.

But let all such remember that the sentence is past already upon them, (as hath bin said) and it shall stand, unlesse repentance and amendment of life revoke it. And albeit it be not fully executed; Yet it is put in execution by *Degrees*, as was *Adam's* sentence executed on him; *In dying he did dye*, Gen. 2. 17. So soon as ever he had sinned, Death began to wound his Body by Hunger, Cold, Nakednesse, losse of Beauty, &c. So here, the sentence hath seized on thee, and in being hacked thou art slain. It is not the last sand that doth exhaust the Glasse, nor the last stroak that doth fell the Oake; the *Axe* is at work upon thee, not a Sermon that thou hearest, but gives a Chop at thy Root; every threatening, every denunciation of wrath and vengeance is a sa blow with the *Axe* and after a while will lay thee flat; Yea, all things that do befall thee, and happen unto thee; Every losse is as an *Axe*, every Crosse, every Affliction is as an *Axe* that shall work to thy ruine; The very Prosperity is an *Axe* that will  
flay



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slay thee, *Prov. 1.32.* As all things work for the best to them that love God, and are fruitful in good works; So all things work for the worst, and tend to the destruction of them that love him not, and are barren and unfruitful in the works of holynesse.

*Prov. 1.32.*  
*Rom. 8.29.*

How God proceeds, and by what degrees he executes this sentence on a barren Professor, you have bin shewed. Now apply all unto thy self, and search thy own soul; whether or not in some degree, or other, thou art under this curse, at least near ~~un-~~ to it, if not under it.

It may be that thou art still a frequenter of the Ordinances, thou resortest to God's House; Thou hearest, prayest, communicatest with the Children of God. But, Do those Ordinances speak any comfort and encouragement unto thee? Doth God look amiably upon thee, when thou comest into his presence? Doth he vouchsafe to meet thee, and cause the light of his Countenance to shine upon thee? Doth he speak unto thee as he doth unto his, *Peace, Psal. 85. 8.* Doth he not rather hide his face from thee, and withdraw himself, his favour and his loving kindnesse? insomuch that thou findest no sweetnesse, no comfort in the performance of holy Duties; no work of his blessed spirit in quickening, strengthening, comforting of thee? If so, thou mayst justly fear that thou art already cast forth, and (spiritually) excommunicated from having fellowship with God from Christ, and from the blessed spirit of grace; and hast great cause to cry out with *David, Psal. 22. 1. My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

*Psal. 85. 8.*

*Psal. 22. 1.*

Again, art thou not a withered Christian, strangely altered in thy Judgment from what thou wert? Thou formerly esteemedst the Church of England to be the true Church of Christ; Her Ministers true Ministers, lawfully sent and called; the Word by them taught thou receivedst as the Word of God himself; Sacraments by them administred, as being of Divine institution, not of Humane invention: but now it is otherwise with thee; Thy Mother (whose Womb bare thee, and whose papps have given thee suck,) thou now defamest, esteamest Her for a strumpet, (albeit She be thy Mother); Her Servants the Ministers of the Word and Sacraments are, in thy account, Antichristian; the

*1 Thes. 2. 13.*

2 King. 1.

1.

Luke 24.

32.

Aq. 18. 17.

Ordinances but Mens traditions; and as much good may be got (thou thinkest) by the hearing of a Cobler or Tinker in a Stable, as by hearing any of these Ministers in a *Steeple house* (as thou termest it). Are not thy Affections to holy Dutyes, growen cold and chill (like *David* in his old age) no hear in them? Thou Hearest, Readeſt, Prayeſt, &c. but without any Life or Spirit; In former times thy Spirit did even *burn within thee*, and was stirred up with indignation against Swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and open prophaneſſe; Now thou art of *Gallio's* temper, and art come to a ſtate of Neutrality, and canſt digeſt it well enough, to hear and ſee theſe; yea, and greater abominations then theſe.

Mat. 21.

20.

And is there not a manifeſt withering in thy life and whole converſation? Thou ſeemed'ſt to be ſtrict in thy wayes, now art waxed looſe and careleſſe; Thou wert (ſeemingly) careful of ſanctifying the Sabbath; now all care of that is layd aſide, as a matter meerly ceremoniall: Family Duties wholly omitted (if not ſcorned and derided). Thy green leaves are withered, ſo that comparing what thou art to what thou haſt bin, it may be ſaid of thee what the Diſciples ſaid of the Figg-Tree that Chriſt had cutted, Mat. 21. 20. *Good Lord Maſter, how ſoon is it withered?*

Nah. 1. 10.

Laſtly, Art thou not in the number of thoſe that ſeparateſt thy ſelf from the publique Aſſembly, and joyneſt to the ſociety of Seducers? Haſt thou not bin carried away with Schiſm or Hereſie, or ſome ſtrange fantaſtical opinion or other? and ſo art *bound up* in the ſame bundle with Sectaries (as Anabaptiſts, Quakers, Seekers, and ſuch like); and joyned with them as members of their congregated Churches? If thou haſt not proceeded ſo far, yet expect that this will follow as a juſt Judgment of God upon thy withering, (if thou repent not); and after ſuch a faggoting and binding up what can be expected but the fire? and ſuch withered and dried Trees will make the fierceſt and hotteſt fire, becauſe they are moſt ſeared, and *as ſnell fully dry*, Nah. 1. 10.

Uſe 3.

Rom. 13. 3.

Wouldſt thou then be *out of fear* of this dreadful Sentence, (as the Apoſtle ſpeaking of higher Powers) then *do that which is good*, and bring forth the Fruit of a godly Life: for this ſentence

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tence is not a terror to the good and fruitful Christian, but to the bad and barren.

Barrenness of the Womb was ever held amongst the Jews for a Curse, and a Reproach. For a Curse; So *Michol* was punished for her scoffing at *Dauid's* devotion; and *Abimilech* was plagued for taking away *Abraham's* wife from him, (so saith the Text,) the Lord had fast closed up all the Wombs of *Abimilech's* house, because of *Sarah Abraham's* wife: But upon *Abraham's* prayer God healed *Abimilech*, and his Wife, and his Mayd-Servants, and they bare Children, *Gen. 20. 17, 18.* Give them O Lord, what wilt thou give them? give them a miscarrying Womb and dry Breasts, (saith the Prophet concerning *Ephraim*, *Hos. 9. 14.*) which words howbeit they are uttered by way of Intercession, (and not of Imprecation) out of affection to that People, and not out of indignation against them, (he preferring the lesse evil before the greater, the miscarrying Womb and dry Breast, before the bringing forth of Children, and nourishing of them up to Idolatry and slaughter) yet it implies that it was a Judgment to be barren, albeit far lesse then that which was foretold by the Prophet, that should befall *Ephraim*, that he should bring forth Children unto the murtherer; that is, they should fall under the hand of a murthering Enemy. And as it was esteemed for a Curse amongst them, so likewise it was a shame and a reproach as the Mother of the Baptist intimates, in that saying of hers, *Luke 1. 25.* Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the dayes wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach from amongst men, (albeit since the coming of Christ we have not the same opinion of it, nor the same reason). But the barrenness of the Womb is nothing, being compared with the Curse and Plague of a dry and barren heart, albeit by many lesse respected, who being barren, can cry out with *Rachel*, Give me Children or else I dye: but though the Heart be barren of grace, and the life of good works, (upon which, death will inevitably follow,) there is little or no complaint made of that. *Hannah* bitterly lamented the barrenness of her body, inasmuch that she did neither eat nor drink, nor had she any heart to go up unto the Temple to offer sacrifice; how then can any barren soul eat or drink with a merry heart? being not onely near unto

2 Sam. 6.  
23.

Gen. 20.  
17, 18.

Hos. 9. 14.  
Explained.  
Payens in  
loc.

Luk. 1. 25.

Gen. 30. 1.

1 Sam. 1.  
7.

H:b. 6. 8.

*Curſing* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh) but *under it*, as *Damocles* (one of *Dionyſius* his Paraſites) was under the glittering ſword (which hung over his head only by a briſtle of a Horſe's upper lip) as he ſat in the midſt of his choyeſt delicacies.

Prov. 30.  
15, 16.

*Solomon* tells us that a *barren Womb* is one of the *four things* that cries out *Give, give, and is never ſatisfied*; I would we could add this as the *ſiſh*, the *barren heart*. Lord God, *What wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go Childleſſe?* (ſaid *Abraham* to God, *Gen. 15. 2*).

Gen. 15. 2.

The want of that did put his mouth ſo out of taſte, that he could reliſh nothing, nor his Victory, (mentioned before) nor his Riches; no, nor thoſe promiſes made unto him: all ſeemed to his palſate but as the *white of an Egg* without taſte, wanting a Child: Come thou thus to God that haſt a barren ſoul; Lament thy condition; ſay, Lord, Thou haſt given me the things of this life in a plentiful and abundant meaſure, I have Health, Wealth, Plenty of outward things; But what will all this do me good, whiſt my heart is barren of grace; my life of holineſſe? Never leave importunate craving, till thou findeſt *twins of grace* ſtriving in the Womb of thy Soul. And ſo we have done with the *Aſſ*; we come now to the *Object*, (*It*).

Job 6. 6.

Gen. 25.  
22.

*Cut it down*]. This Figg-Tree of my own planting, ſett in my Vineyard, &c. The People of the *Jews* were a mighty People, dearly beloved of God: And *Jeruſalem* was the place where he had choſen to dwell for ever; A ſtrong City, it was well fortified with high Walls, and ſtrong Towers, and Caſtles; Amongſt the Citizens were many wiſe heads, ſtout hearts, ſtrong hands; *Glorious things are ſpoken of Jeruſalem the City of God*: Yet, all this could not exempt them from the *Axe of Vengeance*, down they muſt: thence we are taught, that

Pſal. 87. 2,  
& 13<sup>2</sup>, 13,  
14, & 12<sup>2</sup>,  
3:4, & 48,  
12, & 87, 3.

Doct.

*No outward Priviledge can ſecure a ſinfull People from the ſreak of Vengeance.*

Mat. 3. 10.

*Every Tree that bringeth not forth good fruit* (ſaith St. *John*) *is hewen down and caſt into the fire*, Mat. 3. 10. Let it be a Cedar of *Lebanon*; A goodly Cypreſſe, A ſweet Olive, A Vine, A Figg-Tree, (no matter what); if barren, hewen down it ſhall be, as well as the *Trome* or *Dramble*: God reſpects neither greatneſſe, nor goodneſſe, not excellency, nor beauty, nor any outward



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outward thing whatsoever. The Axe hath no eyes, it strikes as the hand guides it. God judgeth without respect of Persons; Read, *Isa.* 2. 10,—18. there you find that there is no avoyding of his Judgments; the *Recks* cannot hide, nor can any shrowd themselves within the Earth from his Vengeance; His Judgments shall seise upon every one that is *proud and lofty*, upon all *Cedars*, as well as *Shrubbs*; nor will *high Towers* and *strong Forts* any whit availe to keep off the stroak of the Axe, they shall be layd to the ground. Many such like threatenings we have, *Deut.* 28. 59, 63. *Isa.* 1. 24. *Jer.* 7. 13, 14. *Math.* 23. 38.

*Isa.* 2. 10,  
—18.

*Deut.* 28.  
59, 63.

*Isa.* 1. 24.

*Jer.* 7. 13,

14.

*Math.* 23.

38.

*Ezek.* 21.

26.

*Explained.*

*Jer.* 22. 24.

I might produce many Instances: hear what God saith of *Zedekiah*, and of his Kingdom, *Ezek.* 22. 26. *Remove the Diamond and take off the Crown*, &c. that is, take the Kingdome from that trecherous Prince, he shall not Rule any more; *Jeconiah* who is now unregarded shall be exalted, and *Zedekiah* who is now exalted, shall be brought low; and concerning the Kingdom of *Israel* and *Judah*, I will utterly overturn it, so that it shall not be erected any more. untill the *Messiah* come, whose right it is, and to him I will spiritually give it: And of *Jeconiah* the son of *Jechojakim*, King of *Judah*, God saith, *Though he were as near* and as precious to me as the *signet on the right hand* useth to be to him that weares it; yet, saith God, *I would pluck him thence*, and cast him away into Captivity, *Jer.* 22. 24. As if he should say, You may think his nearnesse to me, and my affection to him, may preserve him in his place and power, but be not deceived; for, as *I live saith the Lord*, I will pluck him thence. God is as resolute as *Saul* when he had bound the Peop'e, not to eat till night, *As I live, though it be done by my son Jonathan, he shall dye*; *1 Sam.* 14. 39.

I shall content my self with making some brief Use of this Point, and so passe it. God hath done much for this Nation, and graced it with high Priviledges, and rich Pre-ogatives, wherein we seem to outvie the felicity and pride of any other Nation. Of all the Trees in the Garden, we seem to be the Vine: Of all the Flowers in the Field, we are the Lilly and the Rose: And what Priviledge had *Jerusalem*, that we may not glory in the like, or in a better kind? Yet all our Priviledges will

Nah. 3. 8,  
9, 10.

Rev. 2. 5.

Isa. 13. 2, 1.

Jer. 7. 4, 5,  
9.

will not exempt us from wrath in case we go on in our wickedness; but aggravate it. Was *Jerusalem* not spared, that chosen City, and Empresse of the Nations; and can we imagine that we shall escape? *Art thou better then populus No?* (saith God to *Ninevie*) that was situate among the Rivers, that had the Waters round about it, whose Rampart was the Sea, and Her Wall was from the Sea; *Ethiopia* and *Egypt* were Her strength, and it was infinite: Put and *Lubim* were Her helpers; Yet, She was carryed away, She went into Captivity, Nah. 3. 8, 9, 10. Truly the same may be said to us; Is our State safer, or more secure then *Athens*, or *Sparta*, or *Babylon*, or *Troy*, or *Ninevie*, or *Jerusalem*? Or is our Church more glorious, or more renowned then were those 7 famous Churches of *Asia*; *Ephesus*, *Smyrna*, *Pergamus*, *Laodicea*, *Philadelphia*, *Sardis*, in the midst whereof God is said to have had his walk; yet, for their sins, the Candlestick is now removed from them, and those glorious Churches are now become a place for the *Ziim* and the *Ohim*, the Satyres, and the Scretch-Owles to lodge in; They are become cages of unclean and loathsome Birds, overspread with Turcism.

We are too prone to put our trust in some outward Privilege or other, as the Jews did in the Temple, wherein they most gloried, Jer. 7. 4. but this is to trust in lying words (as the Lord tells that People, vers. 8, 9.) whilst they lay in the guilt of manifold transgressions, and came into his presence with wicked dispositions, and hollow hearts, (which God took great notice of,) it was not the crying up of the Temple of the Lord, that would profit them, when they had polluted it, and prophaned it; And therefore he sends them to *Shiloh* (where the Ark of God was for some time) and wills them to look back to that place, and consider whether the presence of the Ark (which indeed was it that made the Temple holy) did shelter it from sorrow and desolation, verse 11. Nor should it shelter that Temple wherein they so much gloried; nor did it. O my Beloved, let us not delude our selves in trusting to any outward privilege whatsoever, nor to those spiritual privileges, (that we have yet continued) that the Doors of the Temple yet stand open unto us, that we have zealous and faithful Ministers yet amongst us, who

stand



stand on their Watch-Tower, and give us warning : Indeed, God is not so wholly dispeased with a People, where these are continued; but that he may be pacified if we seek him in time, *before the decree comes forth.* We have yet the true Religion professed, and by Authority maintained; we have his Ordinances, the Word and Sacraments continued; His favour hath many wayes bin manifested in many great deliverances that we have had : We have strong Walls about this Nation, a great Navy by Sea; Strong Forts by Land : Valiant Souldiers, expert Commanders, &c. But it is in vain to rest upon any of these; All these will be but as paper walls, whilst those sins are so common amongst us, that provoke God's wrath against us. When Phocas had killed his Master *Mauritius* the Emperour (like another *Cain*,) he laboured to secure himself by building a mighty Wall about his Pallace, but he heard a voyce by night that told him, Albeit he built Walls as high as the Clouds, yet sin within those Walls would undermine all. He was a Noble, and wise Captain (of whom I have read,) who being moved to take upon him the defence of a strong City, and encouraged thereunto from the strong Fortifications about it, inexpugnable walls of it, and the plentiful Ammunition that was in it, demanded of them; If there were any covering betwixt it and Heaven? if they had any defence against God's Vengeance, (whom by sin they had provoked.) It is in vain to ask what strength we have by Sea or Land, but let us enquire on what terms we stand with God; Let us draw our eyes from Walls and Towers, and make God our Tower and Fortresse, if we would be safe, *Zach. 2. 5.* Yet to come a little nearer, let none of you content yourselves with the Priviledge of Christians, unlesse you live the life of Christians; nor flatter your selves with an outward Profession, nor any other outward priviledge; It will nothing availe you, that you are chosen out of the rest of the World, to be a *peculiar people unto God*, unlesse you be purged from your iniquities, and be zealous of good works; Nor that you have the Covenant, and the seals thereof; the glorious Gospel of Christ, and the Sacraments; that you have bin Baptized, and thereby admitted into the Family of God; and have eat and drunk at His Table, if you live not as Children and Servants ought to live : for then these will be to you

Zeph. 2. 1.

Zach. 2. 5.

Tim. 2. 14.

1 Sam. 15.  
27, 28.

you, but as the lap of *Samuel's* Garment in the hand of *Saul*, the pledge of your rejection. Nor are these temporal Blessings, which God hath bestowed on you (say it be greatnesse, or high place, or the like), sufficient Arguments of God's Love, or pledges of your Salvation, unlesse withall you have the Grace to employ them to the Glory of the Giver, and to use them to those holy ends for which they were bestowed. Where God hath bestowed the Seed of his Mercies with a liberal hand, He expects a fruitfull harvest of righteousnesse, and true holinesse; But if we return no crop, or bring forth the Tares and Cockles of sin and wickednesse, we shall be but nearer the Curse, and his many benefits shall serve but as so many arguments to aggravate your sins, and encrease your Punishments. And so much let suffice to be spoken of the Severity of the Sentence denounced against this Figg-Tree, *Cut it down*. We come now to the Equity of the Sentence,

*Why cumbereth it the ground?*]

Job. 9. 12.  
Job 33. 13  
2 Sam. 16.  
10.

God need not give a Reason of his doings, his Judgments (although not alwaies manifest, yet they) are alwaies just; yet that he might be justified, and the mouth of wickednes stopped, he is pleased to stoop so low, as to render a Reason of his severity, and to impart to us an account of the ground of his proceedings; thus he deals with the Dresser, as if he should say, Think it not strange that I deal thus severely with this Figg-Tree, I will give thee my Reason, *Terram reddit otiosam*. It is not onely barren in it self, but *it cumbereth the ground*, and causeth barrennesse, drawing away nourishment from other Plants that would bear fruit: In General then, let us pitch our thoughts awhile upon this Truth,

*Dost.*

Job. 7. 10,  
11.  
Lam. 3. 39,  
40.  
Isa. 42. 25.  
& 57. 17.  
Jer. 13. 22.  
& 30. 15.  
2 Thes. 2.  
10.

1 Cor. 11.  
30:  
Calv. in  
Act. 28. 4.

*God's severest Judgments have alwaies most equitable Reasons.* When God strikes, there is some Cause evermore, some Motive, for the inflicting of evill, *Josh. 7. 10, 11. Lament. 3. 39, 40. Isa. 42. 25. & 57. 17. Jer. 13. 22. & 30. 15. 2 Thes. 2. 10. 1 Cor. 11. 30.*

It is a natural Conclusion; (as well as Divine,) that when God is angry he strikes, and when he strikes he is angry. This Judgment (saith *Calvin*, speaking of the Barbarians censure of *St. Paul*) was common in all ages, that those who were grievously punished,



punished, had grievously offended. For God (to the end, that he might make the world without excuse) would have this deeply rooted in the minds of all men, that calamity and adversity (and chiefly, notable destructions) were testimonies and signs of his wrath, and just vengeance against Sin; and thereupon did the very *Barbarians* conclude against *Paul*, that he was a *Murderer*, when they saw the Viper, hang upon his hand, that had leaped out of the fire; whom, though he escaped the Sea, yet *vengeance would not suffer to live*, *Acts 28.4.* That God strikes not in such anger, but with relation to sin, is a Doctrine that a man need not to be catechized in; He needs not read Fathers, nor Councils, nor Schoolmen, nor Summits, nor Casuists, (saith one) no, nor the Bible it self, (out of which, we may bring multitudes of proofs to strengthen it): The very natural man can so conclude, albeit he may err when he comes to particulars; as those men of *Malta* did, who descended hastily and inconsiderately to particular and personal Application. Had they known *Paul*, or known him guilty of Murder, or any such heinous crime, there had been some ground for their censure: For when the sins of any are notoriously and manifestly known unto us (especially, if they be such as God hath threatened to punish with such Judgments;) in such a case it is not unlawful to judge, That for those sins God hath justly smitten them, *Psal. 52. 6, 7.* But when we judge a man guilty of some great sin, (albeit we know no sin by him) onely for the Affliction that he endures, and the Judgment of God that is upon him, is great rashnesse; And for this, *Job's* friends were reprov'd sharply: Thus the men of *Malta* failed; they judged that the Judgment upon this man, *St. Paul*, was an evidence of his guiltinesse in this offence of Murder; (For there were many crimes, and those Capital, and such as would have induced death, on this side of Murder,) but they stopped at none till they came to the worst, and therein they transgressed the bounds of Charity, and were faulty. But that God is angry when he strikes, and that he hath just cause to strike when he doth, is an undeniable Conclusion, from the Dictate of Nature as well as Scripture.

Act. 28.4.

Reas.

For God is a righteous God, and cannot do other than right; unlesse he should deny himself, which is altogether impossible for him to do, *Gen. 18. 25. Dent. 32. 4. Job 8. 3. & 34. 10, 11 Rom. 3. 5, 6.*

Secondly, He is gracious and slow to anger, *Exod. 34.* Favours are from God's own bowels, but Judgments alwaies are forced, as the Bee stings not till it be provoaked. Thus it is in the maine Poynt of a man's eternal estate; man's Salvation is *ex mero beneplacito*, The gift of God is eternall life; but his damnation is never without a cause in man. *The Soul that sinneth shall dy*; so is it in this case of lesser Good or Evill.

Use.

We may make good Use of this, in all Judgments and afflictions that befall our selves, or others, (seem they never so severe): Let us learn to justify God, and clear him from all injustice, *Psal. 51. 4. Rom. 3. 4.* David indeed complained justly of his enemies, that they persecuted him without a cause, *Psal. 35. 19.* that is, In respect of them, he had given them no cause so to do; but who can charge God with this injustice, but he must charge God foolishly and impiously? He never smites till he be provoked; nor alwaies then: God, when he doth smite, exacteth lesse of us then our sins deserve, as *Zophar* said to *Job 11. 6.* An Ounce of Judgment was never without a Pound of Sin.

Yet when any Judgment lyes upon us, we are too apt to think that God deals therein over-severely with us; and are ready to cast a fullen frown upon God, with *Cur me cordis?* Why dost thou smite me? It is storied of *Titus Vespasianus* the Emperour, that lying on his death bed, and looking up to heaven, he complained of his Gods, saying, *Immerenti sibi vitam eripi*, That he deserved not to dy, having never committed any thing, in his whole life, whereof he repented, but one; (surely he had so much the more cause to repent him now). But why speak I of him? *Job* was a holy, godly man, and confessed his own vilenesse and guiltinesse before God, as appears *Job 40. 4.* yet he had in himself, a secret conceit that he was not so vile and sinfull as to deserue such heavy Afflictions, as God had laid upon him; which was the reason of God's so speaking to him, *verf. 8. Wilt thou also disanull my Judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou maist be righteous?* The best of us are apt, under heavy afflictions,

*Job 40. 4.  
Ver. 8.*

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ons, to disanull God's proceedings with us, and question God's righteous proceedings therein : but this may not be ; we may not give liberty to tongue, or thought, to murmur or repine under God's strokes : But

First, Learn *Silence*, and with *Job* to lay our hands upon our mouths, *Job* 40.4.5. and with *David*, *Psal.* 39.9. to be dumb: nor onely bind our *Tongues* to the good behaviour, that they do not speak impatiently against God; but our very *Hearts* must be kept from inward *repining* and *freting* against him, *Psal.* 62. 1. Truly my *Soul* keepeth silence unto God.

*Job* 4. 4. 6.  
*Psal.* 39 9.

*Psal.* 62. 1.

Secondly, Acknowledge God to be *just*, in all that hath befallen us: *I have sinned* (saide holy *Job*), *What shall I do to thee, O thou Preserver of men?* This *David* confessed, *I know O Lord that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*, *Psal.* 119.75. Which saying of *David*, *Mamitis* the Emperour used, when his Children were slain before his eyes, and after that, his own eyes put out, *Righteous art thou O Lord and just are thy Judgments*. Thus it should be with us in all Judgments that befall a Land or Nation (seem they never so severe and sharp): Let us learn to justify God therein. As did the Princes of *Israel*, and the King himself: When God punished them by *Shishak*, they said, *The Lord is righteous*, 2 *Chron.* 12.6. the like confession did the Church make, *Lament.* 1. 18. So *Neh.* 9.33. & *Dan.* 9.14. & *Mich.* 7.9. They have not onely confessed God's *righteousnesse* therein, but his *Goodnesse* and *Mercy*; some mitigation of the rigour of Justice; some cause of admiring rather his Indulgence towards them, than of repining against him for his severe dealing with them, *Lament.* 3. 22. *It is the Lord's Mercy that we are not utterly consumed*; that is from being a People, *because his compassions fail not*.

*Job* 7.20.  
*Psal.* 119.  
75.

2 *Chr.* 12.  
6.  
*Lam.* 1.18.  
*Neh.* 9.33.  
*Dan.* 9.14.  
*Mich.* 7.9.

*Lam.* 3.22.

Thirdly, *Patiently bear* the sorest correction that God is pleased to lay upon us, out of this perswasion, *that we have deserved more*. Thus *Ezra*, speaking of the extream Judgment of God upon his People in the *Babylonish* Captivity, which was the extreamest and heaviest Judgment that ever God had inflicted upon any people under Heaven (as appears by that we read *Lam.* 1. 12. & *Dan.* 9.12.): yet he confesseth, *Thou our God hast punished us lesse than our Iniquities deserve*, *Ezra* 9.13. *When their*

*Lam.* 1. 12.  
*Dan.* 9.12.  
*Ezt.* 9 13.

Lev. 26. 41  
Mich. 7. 9,  
10.

1 Joh. 3. 20

Job. 13. 26.

1 Sam. 17.  
29.

2 Sam. 21.  
1.

Jer. 8. 6.  
Ezek. 16,

43.  
*Quest.*

*Resp.*

Jud. 1. 6, 7.

1 Sam. 15.  
33.

Exod. 1. 22

Talia quis-

q; luat; qua-

lia quisq;  
facit.

Euseb. 1. 9.

Bedinl. 6.  
de Rep. Lin.

Decad. 1.  
1 King. 21.  
19.

Jer. 7. 32.

*uncircumcised heart is humbled (saith God), then they shall accept of the punishment of their Iniquity.* Levit. 26. 41. that is, they shall willingly bear them. Well may that Offender bear a brand in the hand, who saves his neck *Mich. 7. 9, 10.* Ransack thine own heart, and thou shalt find that thou hast deserved that which thou sufferest, & more; and if thy conscience condemn thee, *God is greater.*

Fourthly, If in case the Cause and Reason of God's severity be unknown unto us, yet let us learn to justify God therein: resting assured, that there is Cause enough, albeit (as yet) we have not found it out. His Judgments are, sometimes secret, but alwaies just; It is not possible, that he should do any wrong to any of his Creatures; his Will is the Rule of Justice, and every thing is right because it is his Will, to have it so; But besides this, there is some particular Cause, or Reason, why God writes such bitter things against us. Therefore, as David answered his Brother, so answer thy repining Soul, 1 Sam. 17. 29. What hath God now done, *is there not a Cause.* Therefore,

Fifthly, Search out the Cause, (if it may be) as did David, 2 Sam. 21. 1. God blames the want of this, Jer. 8. 6. Ezek. 16. 43.

But how may we find out the particular Cause, for which God punisheth us? What must be done in this case?

God doth so order his Judgments (commonly), that in the Punishment, we may see the Sin; and in the Sin foresee the Punishment. Sometimes, the very Punishment, and Circumstances of it, shewes us the Cause. God (many times) punisheth us in the like kind, as in Adonibezeck's Case, Judg. 1. 6, 7. And in Agag's Case, 1 Sam. 15. 33. And Pharaoh's Case, Exod. 1. 22. He drowned the Children, and was drowned himself, Exod. 14. 28. and many others, wherewith History (both sacred and prophane) doth abound. And for the better discovery, God is pleased many times to observe the Circumstances of Place, as in Ahab, 1 King. 21. 19. *In the place where Doggs licked the blood of Naboth, shall Doggs lick thy blood, even thine.* In Tophet where the Idolatrous Israelites sacrificed their Children, in the same place shall they be slaughtered Jer. 7. 32. So Aristotle tells us of a lewd Son, who dragged his Father by the hair of his head to the threshold of the House; and was himself dragged to the same place, by his Son. and in the same manner.

And



And sometimes God makes choyce of that *time* to punish wherein the fault hath been commit ed : *Whilst the meat was in the mouths* of the lustling Israelites, the wrath of God came upon them, (saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 78. 30.*) Thus *Titus* began the siege of *Jerusalem*, (as some have exactly calculated) upon the same day, in which our Saviour suffered : And as the Jews put Christ to death at the *Feast of the Passeeover* ; So, at the same time of the year, when multitudes of Jews were met together at *Jerusalem*, to celebrate that Feast, according to the Law, the *Romans* came upon them, and destroyed both them and their City. Our own *Chronicles* tell us of a great man, in the daies of *Richard the third*, who conspired the death of the Queen's Kindred ; and by indirect means, and illegal waies, without trial of Law, or offence given, had fetcht off the heads of the Earl *Rivers* and *Gray*, and others (executed at *Pomfret* in the North). He, at the same time of the year, the same day of the Month, the same hour of the Day, and if curiosity may go further, (saith one) the same minute of an hour (as neer as could be guessed), after the same lawlesse manner, had his head stricken off in the Tower of *London*.

Much may be gathered from the *Part* that is punished or afflicted. *Jeroboam* stretched out his hand to strike the man of God, and God strikes that hand of his, *It was dried up, so that he could not pull it in again unto him*, 1 King. 13. 4. The *Sodomites* had eyes full of *Adultery* and *Uncleannesse*, and were stricken with *blindnesse*, Gen. 19. 11. So *Sampson's* eyes were first pulled out, which first allured him unto sin, *Judg. 16. 21*. That rich *Epicure*, mentioned in the Gospel, offended most in his *Taste*, and is tormented in his *Tongue*, Luke 16. 24. So were the *Blasphemers*, mentioned *Revel. 16. 9, 10.* they gnawed their *Tongues* for pain. The *Adulteresse's* thigh did rot, and her *Belly* swell, *Numb. 5. 21*. *Zimri* and *Cozbi* were thrust through the *Belly*, *Numb. 25. 8*, *Jehoram* was stricken in his *Bowels*, untill they fell out, for that he had no *Bowels of Compassion* towards his Brethren. but slew them all with the *Sword*, 2 *Chron. 21. 13, 15, 19*. *Nichanor's* head and right hand were stricken off, which he had lift up against the *Sanctuary*, and wherewith he had blasphemed the God of the *Sanctuary*, 1 *Machab. 7. 47*. The Law

Pl. 78. 30.

Caesar Ba-  
yon.

L. Hastings

1 King. 13.  
4.  
Gen. 19.  
11.  
Judg. 16.  
21.  
Luke 16.  
24.  
Revel. 16.  
9, 10.  
Numb. 5. 21  
Numb. 25. 8

2 Chr. 21.  
13, 15, 19.

1 Mach. 7.  
47.

was

Levit. 24.

was Eye for Eye, Tooth for Tooth, *Levit. 24.* God takes special notice of the offending Member.

Mat. 7. 2.

Not is the *Measure* of the Punishment to be disregarded; God often observes the like measure, and proportion, in inflicting Punishment. Hear what Christ saith, *Mat. 7. 2.* *As we mete to others, it shall be measured to us again: a Measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.* Reward her (saith the Angel, of Babylon) as she rewarded you; *In the Cup which she hath filled, fill to her double, Revel. 16. 6.* It is storied of Caesar,

Rev. 16. 6.

that he had undone 23 Countreys, and he had 23 wounds given him, whereof he died. And for the manner, Hear what the Prophet speaketh *Isa. 33. 1.* *Wee to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoyled: When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoyled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.* So *Exod. 22. 22, 24.* *Prov. 1. 24, 28.* *2 Thes. 1. 6.* *Jam. 2. 13.* Wee might abound in Examples. I shall trouble you onely with one Instance more, and that is in *Eli*; in every parcel of whose Punishment, his Fault, and God's Justice in punishing of it, was made conspicuous,

Isa. 33. 1.

Exod. 22.

22. 24.

Prov. 1. 24,

28.

2 Thes. 1. 6

Jam. 2. 13.

1 Sam. 2.

30, 31, 32,

33, 34, 35,

36.

*1 Sam. 2. 30, &c.* First, His Sons despise God, and God lightly esteemes them. Secondly, Old *Eli* was indulgent, therefore not an old man of his House shall be left, ver. 31. Thirdly, His Sons were enemies to God in the profession, and therefore he should see an enemy in God's Habitation, ver. 32. Fourthly, He punished not them, therefore they should live to punish him, to consume his eyes, and grieve his heart, ver. 33. Fifthly, He preferred their life to his Maker's honour, therefore they shall dy in ignominy, and with dishonour, ver. 34. Sixthly, He abused his Authority with connivence, and therefore God would translate it to another, who should use it better, ver. 35. Seventhly, Forasmuch as his Sons were so sawty as to take the meat from off God's Trencher, therefore his Family shall be brought to bogg a morsel of Bread, ver. 36. Eighthly, and Lastly, For that he neglected to take vengeance on their iniquities, therefore God would punish both him and them, and that severely, *cap. 3. 11, 12, 13, 14.*

1 Sam. 3.

21.—25.

Thus, as God punisheth alwaies *de condigno*, so sometimes *de congruo & in analogo*; He alwaies punisheth Sin in some kind, and



# The Figg-lesse Figg-Tree.

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and sometimes in its own kind, according to that of the wise man, *Prov. 14. 14. The Backslider in heart shall be filled with his own waies.* And this he doth, that mens punishments may be as Glasses, wherein their sins may be seen more clearly; if not for their Repentance, yet for the warning of others.

And sometimes, God is pleased to punish Sin with *contrarieties*: *Siméon* and *Levi* were united and combined in the Sin of Murther, therefore they shall be *devided* and *scattered* in the Land of *Israel*, *Gen. 49. 7.* Thus God punished the Pride of the *Daughters of Zion*: In stead of *sweet smell*, there shall be a *stink*; in stead of a *Girdle*, a *Rent*; and in stead of *well set haire*, *baldfesse*; and in stead of a *Stomacher*, a *girding of Sack cloth*; and *Burning* in stead of *Beauty*, *Isa. 3. 24.* The covetous man's *Riches shall be corrupt*, and his *Garments moth-eaten*, *Jam. 5. 2.* The *Prodigall's wastefulnesse* is followed with *want* and *beggary*, *Luk. 15.* *Drunkennesse* and *Epicurism*, he punisheth with *Famine* and a *thin Vintage*, *Joel 1. 5, 10.* And thus we may find some proportion in the disproportion that is betwixt the Sin and Punishment; and, in the Judgment inflicted, read the abuse of the contrary *Mercy*. Hath God cast *Shame* and *Disgrace* upon thee? then the cause of it very likely was thy *Pride*: Is the Punishment *Want*? then the cause may be, *Abuse of Plenty* and *Abundance*: Is it *War*, then *Abuse of Peace*, &c. And thus from the Punishment may the Sin be read.

Secondly, If we hearken to the *Upbraidings* of our *Consciences*, they will tell us (if they be well awakened) what the fault is, for which we are punished. So *Gen. 43. 21.* the *Conscience* of those *Patriarchs* brought their old sins to a new reckoning; It was many years since that they had sold *Joseph*, so long agoe that *Joseph* was grown out of knowledge with them, *ver. 8.* All this while, *Conscience* makes no noise, but followes them slyly and silently through the *Wilderness*, and home to their *Father's House*, and then into *Egypt*; but when it found them to be cooped up three daies in *Pharaoh's ward*, now it bayes at them, and flies upon them, and tells them right, what was the reason that they were so roughly used: There were other sins (*questionlesse*) whereof they stood guilty, and which had bin committed by them; and some, long since that of selling their Brother; but their

*Pro. 14. 14*

*Gen. 49. 7.*

*Isa. 3. 24.*  
*Jam. 5. 2.*  
*Luk. 15.*  
*13. 16.*

*Joel 1. 5,*  
*10.*

*Gen. 43.*  
*21.*

Dr. Harris

Fuller  
Comment  
on 1 Cor.  
11. 30.Job 10. 2.  
& 13. 23.  
Psal. 99. 14Pet. Mart.  
in 2 Sam.  
24.

their accusing conscience tells them, that their present trouble befell them, for their cruelty to their Brother, in that when they saw the *anguish of his Soul*, and that he besought them, Good Brothers deal not so harshly with me, good Brother *Reuben*, Brother *Simon*, &c. but we would not hear (say they) *therefore is this distress come upon us*. When we hunt after that sin which causeth our Woe, and find our selves, either to be at a losse, or cold Sent; If once our conscience begins to spend her open mouth, we may conclude, that that way went the game, (as one speaketh aptly).

Thirdly, In short, if after all this done, thou canst not find out the Cause, why God is so displeased with thee, go to him and desire him (with *Job*) to shew thee wherefore he contendeth with thee, *Job 10. 2. & 13. 23. Shew me my Rebellion and my Sin*. God is as willing to teach his Children as to correct his Children, *Psal. 99. 12. Blessed is the man whom thou correctest and teachest*: Desire God to add teaching o correction, that thou maist know the meaning of the Rod, and what the Cause is; joyn Prayer with the other means, and doubt not, but rest assured, in due time it shall be discovered: In the mean time make sure work; repent of all thy sins in general, and bewail that sin especially (if grosse) in a more especiall manner, that thou hast least sorrowed for. It is related of the Adulterous Mother, of those three Brothers, *Gratian*, *Lombard*, and *Comester*, that being warned by her Confessor to be sorry for her Fault; she told him, that considering what rare Schollars, and men of note her Sons were, she could not be so sorry for her sin, as she should, because her fault had so much profited the Church: His Answer unto her was, *Dole, quod non doles, quod dolere non possis*; be sorry for this, then, that thou canst not be sorry. So if thou hast not truly humbled thy Soul, and deeply afflicted it for that one Sin, (it being hid from thine eyes,) repent now, that thou hast not repented for it, and humble thy Soul before God, for that thou hast been no more grieved, and humbled. Indeed when we have repented the best we can for all our sins; we shall have cause to repent us of our Impenitency, of a want of Repentance and godly sorrow in us, albeit ignorant and impenitent Persons are not thereof sensible. Thus much in general. Now, more particularly to the Reason, *Why cumberst it the Ground?* The



The Reason is rendered in an Interrogatory way, Why? There are divers ends of propounding Questions (as I have shewed in my Exposition on some other Parables;) I shall not now trouble you therewith: It is usual with us when one would expresse a matter with greatest force, to propound it by way of Question and Interrogation: So, Rom. 6. 1, 2. *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: How shall we that are dead in sin, live any longer therein? We cannot do it, we dare not do it; So here, Why Cumbers it the ground? that is, it must not do it, it shall not do it.*

*It Cumbers the ground, and takes up room in the Vineyard: It is not onely unfruitful in it self, but terram inutilem reddit, it makes the ground barren, and draws the heart of the Earth, and hinders the fructifying of other Plants which would bear better, and bring forth fruit in more abundance, were it not for it; and so much the word in this place imports. Thence we infer that,*

*Barren Professors are cumberfome: Unprofitable burdens they are to the Vineyard of the Lord.*

They are so (to speak in the Language of the School) both *Formaliter* and *Effectivè*; Not onely unfruitful in themselves (and so a burthen to the Earth); but also in their *Effects*, as causing barrenness to the soyl, whereon they grow.

First, They are *steril* and barren in *themselves*, and in that respect cumberfome and a burthen to the Earth.

This the Psalmist sets forth most excellently *Psal. 14. 1. They are corrupt, they have done abominable Works, there is none that doth good: And again, verse 3. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no not one.* It is spoken of the whole race of mankind, of all *Adam's* Posterity in the state of nature; and in that state are all wicked Livers, and hypocritical Professors; and so aptly may it be to them applied, as the Apostle doth in applying it unto the *Jews*, who boasted very much of their Priviledges, *Rom. 3. 10.* All such are unprofitable, and become as rotten and corrupt Branches, and of no more use then rotten and nasty things, which men cast out for their unprofitableness; and being unprofitable, needs must they be burthensome; like a rotten tooth, which is not

SC

onely

See my  
Friend at  
Mid-Night  
p. 32.  
Rom. 6. 1,  
2.

Bez. An-  
not. in loc.

Κατα-  
γιν.

Doct.

Psal. 14. 1,  
3.

Rom. 3. 10.

Ezek. 15.  
1, 2, 3.

onely unserviceable, but dolorous and painful.

That which we read, *Ezek. 15. 1, 2, 3.* is worth our consideration, whereby the unfitness of the Vine-branch for any work, the unusefulness and unprofitableness of the Hypocritical *Israelites*, is set forth: The Vine is a noble Plant, in respect of the Fruit it bears; but, being barren and fruitlesse, it is uselesse: The Ash serves for Plough-boote and Cart-boote; The Oake for Gate-boote and Stile-boote; Thornes and Bushes for Hedge-boote: Old doated Trees (as we say) for Shinn-boote. But of all Trees, the wood of the Vine is unserviceable; It is not fit to make so much as a Pegg to hang any Vessel thereon: *Lo, such is Israel* (saith God), if it bare good Fruit, it would be dear and precious unto me; but being barren and unfruitful it is of no use, unfit for any service.

Psal. 1. 9.  
Jude v. 12.

Many Comparisons and Resemblances are used in Scripture to set forth the unprofitableness of a barren Professor. They are resembled to *Chaff*, to *Thorns*, and *Thistles*; to *Clouds without water*; *Trees withered*, without fruit; and such like. Amongst others, that of our Saviour is very pertinent, who resembles such to *Salt that hath lost its savour*, which is good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot, *Math. 5. 13.*

Mat. 5. 13.

Other things when they have lost their savour, recover it by the virtue of salt applied unto them; but if salt it self have lost its savour, nothing is able to fetch it again. There is nothing in nature that can restore it to its former quality; Other things (even after their corruption) may be useful for some purposes: Sowre Wine makes Vinegar, Raggs Paper, Soyl and Rubbish is good to fat the ground; but savourlesse salt is good for nothing but the Dunghill; nor is it fit for that, and therefore must necessarily be trodden under foot, as utterly unprofitable, which is not onely a thing *Calamitous*, but extreemly *Ignominious*. Neither is the dumb and unprofitable Minister onely, this unfavoury salt (albeit Christ directed that Speech to his Apostles); but every Professor of godlin he that hath denyed the power thereof, whose spirit is barren of the Fruit of good *Motions*, The *Understanding* barren of the Fruit of good *Meditations* The *Will* barren of the Fruit of good *Resolutions*, The *Sensitive Appetite* barren of the Fruit of good *Affections*, The *whole man* barren of the Fruit

2. Tim. 3. 5.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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of good Works; every such a one is as this Figgless Figg-Tree, burthen some to the Earth, and cumber some to the ground that bears them.

Secondly, As they *do no good*, and are cumber some in that respect; so they *do much harm*, and so become unprofitable burthens, and that many wayes.

First, To the *Soyl* whereon they grow, the very Earth is the worse for a fruitlesse Figg-Tree. It was the sin of man (at first) that caused God to curse the Earth to *Thorns* and *Thistles*, and ever since he hath turned a *fruitfull Land into barrennesse*, for the wickednesse of those that dwell therein. The sins of those within the pale, are they for which a Land doth mourn, *Hos. 1.—4.* So is it in the Vineyard of the Lord: Let a barren and unprofitable Figg-Tree have his standing wheresoever, the ground shall be the worse, and not the better for him: Let *Rehoboam* be rooted amongst the Kings in the Land of *Judah*, and the *Sheilds* he finds of *Gold*, he will leave of *Brasse*: Let *Balaam* be numbred amongst the Prophets, and *Judas* amongst the Apostles; and the Vineyard of the Lord shall find cause enough to say of such a Figg-Tree, that it *cumbers the ground*: The Church suffers by the growth of such Trees; it loseth her heart and farnesse; Her Beauty and Glory is much blemished by the growth of such plants in it.

Secondly, Such barren Trees are cumber some and burthensome to *other Trees* and Plants, that grow (or might grow) in the Vineyard; and that divers wayes.

First, A barren Tree possesseth the place of a better, and by its good will would not suffer any to grow near it; The best Rooms at Feasts, the chief Seats in Synagogues, proud Pharisees will take up; nor is there any place for better Guests, till they be removed lower, and commanded to give place, and so room made (by their removal) for others that are invited.

That passage which we have in *Isa. 22. 20.* is worthy of serious consideration; God promiseth to call *Eliakim*, the Son of *Hilkiah*, and to commit the Government of his people in his Hand, and so fasten him as a *nayl* driven to the Head, in a *sure place*, on whom they should hang all the glory of his Fathers House, from the *Vessels of the Cups*, even to all the *Vessels of the*

Gen. 3. 7.

Psal. 107.

37.

Jer. 23. 10.

Hos. 1. —

4.

1 King. 14.

37.

Isa. 5. 8.

Luke 14. 9.

Isa. 22. 20.

Vers. 19.

Vers. 25.

Prov. I. 8

2 Sam. 2. 1.

Acts I. 20.

Rom. II.  
19.Mat. 21.  
43.

*Flaggons*; with matters, both great and small, should he be trusted; but *Eliakim's* substitution must be upon *Shebna's* deprivation; God will first drive him from his Station, and pluck him down from his State, vers. 19. *In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, shall the Naye that is fastned in a sure place* (meaning *Shebna* who then governed and thought himself sure) *be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burthen that hangs upon it shall be cut off*; In the same day that God doth this, *Eliakim* shall come in and be advanced, (but not before). Thus one Naye drives out another; What *Solomon* speaks of misery, *The Righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the Wicked comes in his stead*; the like may be said of a good mans prosperity: when the wicked are turned off, better come in their room.

The like may be seen in *David's case*, who was annointed to be King over *Israel* long before his Installment: *Saul* sat yet upon the Throne, and *David* must be content to stay a while for that, till *Saul* be removed; and, that being done, then he shall be planted and seated in his room, in *Hebron*: So whilst *Judas* supplies the place of an Apostle, honest *Mathias* shall be kept out; his place must be Voyded, before another take his Bishoprick, *Acts* I. 20. The *Jews* they must be broken off before the *Gentiles* be grafted in, *Rom.* II. 19. And whilst those ungrateful Farmers of the Vineyard held their Lease, it could not be taken by others, who would gladly have hyred it, and rendered the Fruit thereof in due season, *Math.* 21. 43. So long as wicked Magistrates, Idle and Scandalous Ministers, Bribing and corrupt Officers, and such like, are in place; o hers who might do, and would do more good, cannot be admitted.

Secondly, Such as are barren and unprofitable in their places, devour not only equal nutriment with him that beareth, but many times starve other inferiour plants within their reach; dia ving away the heart, and fat of the Soyl with their Succours and Feeders: What a breadth beareth some great Ash or Oak? How far do their Roots spread, albeit under ground, and unseen? Yet, it may be perceived by their soaking of the ground, and drawing away nourishment from Corn and Plants, that are near unto them: It is thus with many an unprofitable and barren



ten Christian, he is a *Soaker*, and that in respect both of things that concern this Life and a better; and so, cumbersome. Such are to be found in the *Church*.

That large and liberal maintenance allowed formerly by our fore-Fathers charity, for pious uses (as towards the maintenance of the Ministry, succouring of the poor and needy, &c.) a great part thereof was formerly devoured by idle Moncks, who lived like droans, and minded nothing so much as their Bellies; and (to mend the mater) was afterwards taken from them, and given to others, who spent that which was so charitably given, upon Hounds, and Whores, and such like vicious practises. *Cominens* observed, upon a battle fought in *France*, some lost their Livings by running away, and they were given to such as had out-ran them ten miles; So it is in this Case, we have taken (saith one) from *Papists*, and given to *Rapists*: that which is due to Ministers for their maintenance, and to the poor for their sustenance, is soaked away by some barren *Impropriator*, and Sacrilegious Church-Robber; This many a Parish, in this Nation, can testify.

How many are there in the *Commonwealth* which being in Office, and having Rule and Government in their hands, by Oppression and extortion (or some other indirect course) draw from those, whose back and bellies pinch for it, they having scarce bread to put into the mouths of themselves and Children? How many Officers and Men in high place, have we known growen suddenly Rich, by the spoyl of the Subject, and by impoverishing others? In the dayes of *Pliny*, tribute was paid by many Nations to the *Romans*, for the very shade of *Planes* and *Cedars*. And unlesse it be for the shade of these (which yet is a noysome and pestilent shade) (as anon you shall hear) men cannot say, why they should have such Pensions and Payments to the impoverishing of many? Who may say to them, as sometimes a poor lean widdow woman said to *Baldwin* an Archbishop, who (boasting that he had not eaten flesh for a long time) was told by her that he had eaten up her flesh in oppressing of her, and causing her, to sell her Cow (which was her livelyhood) to satisfy him. When you see small Officers swell up to high estates (and you may often see it) you may easily smell Bribery and Extortion in it.

See how  
How small  
and great  
men raise and  
fall by  
oppression  
in a very  
short  
time

Acts &  
Mon. 230.

In

Prov. 21.  
20.  
Explained.

In private Families likewise there are many such burthen-some Plants to be found: many a faire estate is consumed by Pride and Luxury, Voluptuousnesse and Prodigality. Out of the painful and laborious Silke-worm, ariseth a painted Butter-fly; Through the wasteful Prodigality of one Spend-thrift, many under-Plants are undone, and drawen saplesse; the Wife is brought to misery, Children to beggary, through the profuse expence of some ryotous Husband or Parent, who in a short time consumes a fair Estate, and large Patrimony. *There is Treasure to be desired, and Oyl in the dwelling of the Wife, (saith Solomon,) but a foolish man spendeth it up,* Prov. 21. 20. The meaning of which Proverb is, that it is the care of a wise man to keep that which is bestowed on him through God's bounty, and his own endeavours; but an unthrifty person by his Prodigality, lavisheth out his substance, and maketh himself a pit, wherein his great Estate, yea, and Family is swallowed up and devoured. Thus you see, how the under-Plants both in Church, Common-wealth, and Private-Family, come to be soaked in matters that concern *this Life*, by a barren and over-topping Figg-Tree.

Ezek. 13.  
22.

Ezek. 34.  
19, 21.

Mat. 23.  
13.  
Luke 11.  
52.

And the like might be shewed you how good Plants are exceedingly hindered, in their growth in *things spiritual*, by such barren professors that grow near them. God complained of the iniquity and oppression of the Shepherds, (the chief Rulers amongst the Jews) that they made sad the hearts of his People, discouraging of them in pious courses, *Ex. 13. 22.* And how they did that, is shewed afterwards in that Prophecie; they did *beat & push them with their horns, they did eat up their pasture from them, and trample the rest under their feet,* Ezek. 34. 19, 21. Sad is the case of those Sheep, who have such Shepherds set over them to feed them; And the Scribes and Pharisees took away the *key of knowledge* from the People, and so shut up the Kingdome of Heaven against men, neither entring in themselves, nor suffering others to enter in, that would: for which a *Woe* is denounced against them, *Mat. 23. 13. Luke 11. 52.* Thus they are burthen-some to other Plants that grow near them, by drawing away their sap and nourishment.

Thirdly,



Thirdly, They are troublesome and cumbersome to other Plants by their *unprofitable shade*, over-topping and over-dripping them, and keeping the influence of Heaven from them, so that they cannot enjoy the warm-beams of the Sun, which brings *healing* with it *under its wings*. *Pliny*, speaking of the shade of the tall *Cypress* Tree, saith, that it is *gravis umbra*, a shade noysome and pestilent; And *Claudian* in his invective against *Eutropius*, saith, It is not possible that any thing should thrive or prosper under the shade of such a Consul. *When the Righteous are in Authority, the People rejoyce* (saith *Solomon*); but *when the Wicked bear Rule, the People mourn*, Prov. 29. 2. Let a wicked man be in place of Power or Command, either in Town, City, or Country, he employes his Strength and Power to do mischief; (like the *Ape* or *Monkey*, which being got up to the top of the House, flings down tiles upon the heads of Passengers, and makes mouths and faces at them, or playes some unhappy trick or other): if not so, yet by their Examples and Commands, they so over-drop the under Plants, and keep them under check, that they cannot thrive and prosper under their shadow, *Joh. 7. 48, & 9. 22.*

Fourthly, They are cumbersome, in *harbouring* under their Branches *things hurtful* to other Plants; None shall be harboured under their shade, unlesse it be a stinging Nettle, or some fullen Weed, or some venomous and poysonful Creature. *If a Ruler hearken to lyes, all his Servants are wicked*, Prov. 29. 12. One seeketh to please him, by slandering this honest man, another by telling lyes of that innocent person: Let *Herod* mock *Christ*, and his servants will do the like; Let *Pilate* sit upon the seat of Judicature, and perjury shall be approved, false Witnesses encouraged, *Barrabbas* delivered, and *Christ* (the innocent,) condemned, That which *Esay* speaks, we shall find most true, *Isa. 24. 2. It shall be as with the People, so with the Priest; as with the Servant, so with the Master; as with the Mayd, so with the Mistresse &c.* Let the innocent Lamb, and harmlesse Sheep run under their shade for Shelter; it is a wonder if they meet not with some Bramble or other, that will soon entangle them in their talk, so that they are glad to flie, leaving their fleece behind; suffering in their cause, and think themselves happy if they

Mal. 4. 3.

— Quid  
fertile ter-  
ris. Aut  
plenum se-  
rili possit  
sub consule  
nasci?  
Prov. 29. 2.

Joh. 7. 48,  
& 9. 22.

Prov. 29.  
12.

Luke 23.

11.

Math. 27.

Luke 23.

24.

Isa. 24. 2.

they can but escape with a whole skin. Thus are they burthensome to *other Plants* of the Vineyard.

Fifthly they are burthensome to the *Lord of the Soyle*, and owner of the Vineyard, who complains of such barren Plants, *Isa. 1. 14, 24, & 7, 13, & 43, 24. Amos 2. 13.* God complains of their burthen; they are cumbersome unto him; he finds a pressure under them; he is dishonoured by them, and cannot long endure it.

Sixthly, The *Dressers of the Vineyard* are burthened and cumbered by them; *Christ* the Principal Dresser, laments the barrenness of *Jerusalem*, *Luke 19. 41. Math. 23. 34. Joh. 11. 38.* Christ groaned (as it seems) under the Jews malice.

And the *under-Dressers* the Ministers of the Gospel, they complain of it, *Rom. 9. 1, 2, & 10, 16. Heb. 13. 17.* They are blamed, shamed, and discredited by them. For as the thriving of the Flock is the glory of the Shepherd; and the flourishing and fruitfulness of the Trees, the praise of the Gardiner; so on the contrary, when things thrive not under their hands, they suffer by it. The *Cynick* spying a Boy unmannerly, did strike his Master that did teach him: So the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* told Christ of his Disciples fault, as if it had tended to his Disgrace: Thus do men of this Generation, they lay the blame of barrenness upon the Dressers Back; as if it were onely their fault, that the Tree is unfruitfull. And so much let serve for the explication and confirmation of the Point; Application follows.

Use 1.

See my Exposition on the Parable of a Friend coming to his Friend at Mid-Night. Pag. 239.

You may from hence be rightly informed who they are at this Day, in Court, City, and Country, that are the greatest troublers of Church and State; and with whom the Vineyard of the Lord is most cumbered. In the Primitive times the Christians were charged with all the troubles and calamities that did befall the people: If Sword, Famine, or Pestilence were amongst them; or that *Nilus* did not keep her wonted bounds, then, *Christians* ad *Leones*, the Christians were the Cause thereof, they must be cast unto the Lyons. But this did not begin with them, nor with them did it end: Let *Pharaoh* be asked the question, Who cumbered *Egypt*? He will tell you, that it is this *Moses* and *Aaron*, the Messengers, and Ministers of God; they are the Incendiaries, and Causes of all these Mutinies and Murmuring in the



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the Kingdome; Nor *Pharaoh* nor his Sorcerers, they must be over-looked. Let *Ahab* be asked who it was that troubled *Israel*? & he will tell you that it was (not *Ahab* nor the Prophets of *Baal* but) banished *Elijah* that busie fellow that would be filling Peoples head's with needlesse fears, he it was that troubled all. Let *Amaziah* the high Priest of *Bethel* be enquired of, Who troubles the Court? & he will tell you, that it was (not *Amaziah*, nor the flattering Sycophants of Court, but) *Amos* the Prophet, and such like, they conspire against the King's Life, and will be prying into State-affaires; nor will the Court be quiet, till such be banished the Kings presence, and forbid his Chappel: Let *Haman* be demanded who it was that cumbered the Kings Provinces? and he shall tell you, that the Jews are they; a People refractory to all good Laws; they would not pay their Tax and Tribute; nor was it for the King's profit, to suffer them to live: (but for himself and his Comrades, they aimed at the filling of his Treasury.) Ask once more, Who troubles the City, and you shall have some Rulers and others to wink at themselves, and point at *Paul* and *Silas*, and tell you, that they are the men that trouble the City; yea, that turn the World upside down. Nor shall some *Tertullus* be wanting, who with much Eloquence and Learning will charge *Paul* to be a pestilens fellow (yea, a botch or pestilence it self,) and a mover of sedition amongst the Jewes throughout the World, &c. And if you enquire of the Jewes concerning the point in hand, they will charge *Christ* himself to be an enemy to *Cesar*, forbidding paying of Tribute to him; and warn *Pilate* not to let him go, for then he would shew himself no friend to *Cesar*.

As it hath bin thus in all Ages, so is it now in this last Age of the World: Who are most charged as the Authors of our Churches miseries, and Nations calamities, but those who are most innocent? Serpents and Draggons, Woolves and Doggs are past-by; and the Sheep and Lambs of the Flock, Holy and Religious persons, they are those that stand charged with *England's* troubles: Oh! that we had more men of *Elijah's* spirit, then the ungodly *Ahabs* of the World should be told to their faces, *It is Thou and thy Fathers House that troubles Israel*. Then should you that are of wicked Religion, or of wicked Life,

Tt

hear

Exod. 5. 4, 5.

1 King. 18. 17.

Amos 7. 10, — 16.

Esth. 3. 8.

Act. 16. 20.

Cap. 17. 6

Act. 24. 5. *noisy*.

Luke 23. 2.

Joh. 19. 20.

1 King. 18. 18.

hear it with both your ears, that it is for your Idolatries, your Witch-crafts, and Adulteries; your drunkenness, Whoredoms, and Blasphemies; your mocking and deriding of godliness; your despising of God's Ministers, and persecuting of his Messengers, &c. that hath brought all these great evils upon us: But, albeit there want these in this World that dare tell you this; yet, there will not be wanting a Judge in another World, who shall tell it you? and prove it to your consciences, that you were the *Achans* that troubled *Israel*; and for your so doing, God will trouble you, and it is a righteous thing with him so to do, 2 *Thes.* 1. 6.

*Jos.* 7. 25.  
*1 Thes.* 1. 6

*Use* 2.

In the mean time, let all such know, as live unprofitably or wickedly and lewdly, within the pale of the Church, or that bring forth no fruit, conducing to the Owners profit, and common good of the Vineyard; that they are no other than a burthen to the Earth that bears them, and cumbersome to all that are about them: It were happy, if the injury of a wicked Liver could be confined to his own bosome, that he only should fare the worse for his sins; But it is otherwise, *One Sinner destroyeth much good*, *Eccles.* 9. *alt.* Thou art not onely hurtful to thyself, (that is the least part of thy illness,) but likewise hurtful to the Place, the Town, Country, City, Family, where thou inhabitest: As *Achan* was to all *Israel*; For his Trespasse (in the accursed thing), wrath fell on all the Congregation of *Israel*; That man perished not alone in his Iniquity, *Jos.* 22. 20. He is an ill Member, for which all the Body fares the worse; All fare the worse for thee, that are about thee. Read *Isa.* 14. 20. *Thou hast destroyed thy Land and laid it desolate*; and apply it to thy self.

*Eccles.* 9. 18.

*Jos.* 22. 20

*Isa.* 14. 20.

It is said of some, that they are kind men, harmlesse Souls; As they do no good, so they do no harm to their neighbours, and that they are enemies to none but themselves, &c. But how can this be? Indeed, those that are good, are peaceable and harmlesse, (as *Hamor* and *Shechem* confessed of *Jacob* and his Family *Gen.* 34. 21. ) So it was foretold of times of the Gospel, *Isa.* 11. 9. *they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy Mountain*; but this is not enough: That which God saith of *Abraham*, is likewise true of every Child of *Abraham*, *Thou shalt be a Blessing*, *Gen.* 12. 2. A Blessing to the soyle on which thou growest, and place where

*Gen.* 34. 21  
*Isa.* 11. 9.

*Gen.* 12. 2.



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where thou livest, seeking the good thereof (as did *Mordecai*, *Esth. 10. 3. he sought the wealth of the People*). 'Tis contradictory, to speak thus of thee, that art a professed Christian, that thou art a harmlesse man, but good for nothing; for if thou art not profitable in thy place, harmlesse thou canst not be, inasmuch as thou cumberest better Plants, and drawest away the nourishment from them, which would make to their growth; and with the wan and withered Vine (in the Poet,) thou takest away the fresh colour and sapp from the Vine that growes by thee; And when such as thou art are grubbed, and stubbed up; removed from their station, rooted out of the Church and Nation; so little cause will there be of grieving and mourning for it, as that there will be great cause given of Joy and rejoycing: So *Solomon* tells us, *when it goes well with the righteous the City rejoyceth, and when the wicked perish there is a shouting*, *Prov. 11. 10.* And great cause there is, why God's People should rejoyce and sing thereat; For when a corrupt Magistrate is removed, there is some hope that a better will be planted in his room; when an ignorant or corrupt Minister is cut up, that one more laborious and painful will succeed him; when Bastard Plants are stubbed up by the Roots, there is hope, that the Lord of the Vineyard will replenish it with good Trees: Seldome comes a better (saith the old English Proverb, & it is a true one,) but we do not say, that never comes a better: It sometimes (yea many times) so happens, that a better succeeds in the room of a bad one; but whilst the room is supplied by a bad one, a better comes not (as before was shewed).

Nor is it onely a thing to be joyed in, but wished for; *I would they were cut off that trouble you* (saith the Apostle), *Gal. 5. 12.* which *Cutting off*, some understand of the Censure of Excommunication; but better they, who understand it of some temporal Judgment, whereby the Church might be ridd of them: the like may be wished, to the end, that the Church might flourish: Nor that we ought simply, to wish the death and destruction of any, but the removing of such corrupt Plants as poyson the hopes of Generations to come. And to this may all God's People give their assent, and say *Amen*.

*Esth. 10. 3.*

*Uvaq; livorem conspexit  
Et ducit ab uva. Juv. Sat. 1.*

*Pro. 11. 10.*

*Gal. 5. 12.*

Use 3.

1 Cor. 10.  
24.Pl. 104. 26  
Jer. 2. 24.

Rom. 13.

Dr. Sander-  
son 4 Ser.  
ad pop. p.  
367.

Wherefore, Be we exhorted, and prevailed with, every one of us in our places, to be useful and profitable; *Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth* (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10. 24.) : There are a company of Lubbers in the World, whose greatest care is to eat, drink, and live at ease; and that not onely of the rude Rabble, of the dreggs of the People, but men of high Rank and Quality; who glitter in external Pomp, and flaunt it out in Bravery, spending their time as the *Leviathan* doth in the Sea, in sport and pastime; or, as the *wild Ass* doth in the Wilder-ness, in *snuffing up the wind*, employing their wits about nothing so much, as in making *provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof*. They live in such a sensual and unprofitable torr, as that we might well doubt, whether they had any living Souls in their bodies at all, were it not barely for this one Argument (saith one), That their bodies are a degree sweeter than Carrion, (their Souls, like Salt, keeping their carcases from stinking) : Good they do none, they are but like a *Cypher*, and keep a place, but are of no worth; Or like a Counter on the Table, staying in the World to fill a Number, and when it falls down, there wants one, and so an end : They passe out of the World, as the Hand passeth out of the Basin of Water; which may be somewhat the fouler for washing in it, but it retains no other impressi-  
on of its having been there; whose Epitaph may be that, which, as I have read, was made of such another idle Spectatour of the World,

*Here lyes He, was born and cry'd,  
Liv'd three score years, fell sick, and dy'd.*

Carrion in  
Cron.

Pl. 31. 12.

But be not you such, lest you cry out one day with *Severus, Omnia fui, & nihil profui*; I have been all things, and yet have done no good at all. *David* counted it a great Affliction, that in the time of his Banishment, he was like a *broken Vessel* Psal. 31. 12. that none could make any use of. Without Question, the poorest Servant or Drudge that is, may have more comfort in his estate, (being diligent and faithful in his place,) than the greatest Gentleman, or learnedst Schollar, can have of theirs, in case they do no good with those parts and abilities, which God  
hath



hath entrusted them with. I beseech you therefore, as you tender your own good and comfort, both in life, and death, and at the last day of Judgment, be usefull and profitable, every one of you in your Relations and Callings: Be as the Olive, and Figg-Tree, delighting God and Man with your Fruit: cumber not the Church with a barren life and profession; forget not that a barren life administers matter of Reproach; Against the Husbandman, whose care or skill comes hereby to be questioned; Against the Root, whose life and power is hereby suspected; Against the Branches, who are hereby scandalized: Nor is there any such stumbling block in the World, as an unprofitable and fruitlesse Christian. When the *Philistins* shouted against *Sampson*, it is said, that the Spirit of God came mightily upon him, so that he brake the cords wherewith he was bound, Judg. 15. 14. To hear the clamour of the World, against barren and unfruitful Professours, should stir us up to fruitfulness: *Offences will come, but woe be to those by whom they do come.* But, if you be fruitful in your Relations and Callings; you shall have the Prayers of many, in your health, in your sicknesse; all the Town will pray for you, that God will blesse you with long life, and restore you to health; you shall live desired, and dy lamented: *Jehojada* was honoured at his death, because he had done good in Israel, 2 Chron. 24. 16. And this God will remember at the last day. And so we have done with the Sentence denounced, now follows the Intercession that was made for it.

Jud. 15. 14

Mat. 28. 7.

2 Chre. 24. 16.

*And he Answering, said unto him, Lord let it alone this year also, till I shall digg about it and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down.*

Text.  
Ver. 8, 9.

Which words contain an humble Request, for the suspending of that heavy Judgment before denounced, against that fruitles & unprofitable Figg-Tree, wherein we shall speak of the Persons, and then of the *Petition* it self.

But before I come to speak of either particularly. I shall commend unto you one General (but not unprofitable) Note, from the *Copulative* or *Connexion*; And

No sooner had the Lord of the Vineyard complained to the Dresser

Dresser, of the unprofitableness of this Figg-Tree, (the Jewish Synagogue and Nation) and threatned the destruction of it; but the Dresser steps in, and with humble prayers and supplications, speaks in the behalf of it. Thence we gather,

*Doct.*

*When God falls to complaining and threatning, It is high time, for such as have any Interest in God, to fall to praying: God's threatning times should be our praying times.*

Exod. 32.

7, 11.

Num. 14.

12, 13.

& 16. 45,

46.

2 King. 22.

19.

Ezek. 9. 8.

*Reas. 1.*

Amos 3. 4.

*Explained.*

Exod. 32.

14.

Deut. 9. 19

2 King. 22.

19, 20.

Gen. 19.

20.

Gen. 18. 31

When God complained to *Moses* of *Israel's* wickedness, and threatned their destruction for their stiff-neckedness *Exod. 32. 7.* *Moses* presently fell to praying and interceding for them, *ver. 11. &c.* The like we find, *Numb. 14. 12, 13. & 16. 45, 46.* Thus, that good King *Josiah*, when he heard, from reading the Book of the Law, what great wrath was kindled against the People for their sins, to make them a desolation and a curse, *herent his clothes, and his heart melted, and he humbled himself before the Lord, and wept exceedingly,* as we read, *2 King. 22. 19.* that God's wrath might be averted, and turned away from the People. And when the destruction of *Jerusalem* was revealed to *Ezekiel* by a Vision, his heart was so affected therewith, that he falls down upon his face, cries unto the Lord for them, and expostulates with the Lord on their behalf; *Ah! Lord God, wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel, in pouring out all thy fury upon Jerusalem?* *Ezek. 9. 8.*

God's threatnings are not causlesse, nor groundlesse, (as before you have heard of his Judgments). *Will a Lyon roar in the Forrest when he hath no prey? will a young Lyon cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?* (saith the Prophet *Amos. 3. 4.*) As if he should say, that is not the usuall manner of them; but when they have gotten some prey, or are ready to take it, then they roar to their fellows, and call them in to partake of it: No more will the Lord denounce his fearful Judgments against a people, but where there is just matter of their sins, to be avenged.

Secondly, This course is neither fruitlesse nor successlesse; Upon the earnest Prayer of *Moses*, the Lord changed his mind, from the evill that he intended against his People, *Exod. 32. 14. Deut. 9. 19.* The Prayer of *Josiah* God heard, and spared the People a long time, *2 King. 22. 19, 20.* *Lot* prevailed by his Prayer for one City, *Gen. 19. 20.* And *Abraham*, for five, *Gen. 18. 32.*

Great



Great things have been obtained from God for a sinful People, upon the Prayers of his Servants. This is farther declared in that excellent Prayer which *Solomon* made, *1 King. 8.* and instance is brought in sundry particulars to confirm the truth of the Poynt.

God never yet threatned any Judgment, against a Land, or Nation, or Particular Person, but faithfull and fervent Prayer hath either averted it, or deferred it; abated it, or sweetned it; and so far it hath been successful, if not for others, yet prayer hath returned into the bosomes of those who have prayed, to their comfort.

But are not God's threatnings and denunciations of absolute determination, and sure accomplishment? *Jer. 7. 16. Ezek. 14. 14.* If so, to what purpose is prayer, his Resolutions being unalterable? For resolving this doubt, First, Know

The threatnings and denunciations of God's Judgments are either *Absolute* or *Conditionall*; If *Absolute*, then they are irrevocable, and must take effect; but if *Conditionall*, then they may be changed and altered.

That Denunciation that concerned the eating of the forbidden Fruit, *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely dy*, *Gen. 2. 17.* was *Absolute*, and not to be revoked; Had *Adam* prayed all his life time, that he might not dy, but return to his former condition, yet that Sentence from God had not been reversed. And that threatning of God, against *Moses* and *Aaron* that they should not enter into the Land of *Canaan*, proved to be so, *Numb. 20. 12.* It was *Absolute*, albeit *Moses* understood it *Conditionally*, and therefore besought the Lord, that he might go over *Jordan* into the good Land, but the Lord was wroth with him, and would not hear him; *Let it suffice thee* (saith God), and I speak no more unto me of this matter, *Deut. 3. 26.* And as *Absolute* and peremptory was the threatning, by *Nathan*, from the Lord unto *David*, concerning his Child, *The Child shall surely dy*, *2 Sam. 2. 14.* *David's* hope was, that the threatning was but *Conditionall*, and therefore with fasting, weeping, and prayer, he besought the Lord for it, but the Sentence was not to be reversed; the Child dyed. When the Creatour's Decree shall, either by *Revelation*, or *Event*, be made certainly known

*1 King. 8.*

*Object.*

*Num. 23.*

*19.*

*1 Sam. 15.*

*29.*

*Resp.*

*Jer. 7. 16.*

*Ezek. 14.*

*14.*

*2 Cor. 1.*

*19, 20.*

*Gen. 2. 17.*

*Num. 20.*

*12.*

*Deut. 3. 26*

*2 Sam. 2.*

*14.*

known unto the Creature; then must there be a total recess, and falling off, from the use of the means to effect it, So was it with *David*, in forbearing to pray or mourn any more for the Child; after that he saw that the denunciation was absolute: The like did *Jeremiah*; for albeit we read, that he mourned for the People, after that God had forbid him to pray for them; and prayed in other cases for them; yet he obeyed God therein, not praying against their *Captivity* any more. But we have no such Inhibition as *Jeremiah* had: and, the Lord's Absolute decree being hid from us, so long as a Nation hath Being, we ought not to cease praying.

Other threatnings and denunciations are *Conditionall*, and not so Absolute, but that they admit of an Intervention of Prayer, Repentance, and Amendment of life. The Condition is sometimes *Expressed*, as *Jer. 18. 7, 8*. Such a Nation, such a Kingdom, *I will pluck up, I will pull down, I will destroy*: But say that Nation turns from their evill wayes; then God reverseth that Sentence, *I will not pull down, I will not destroy it*.

The like we have *Ezek. 33. 14, 15*. *The wicked man shall surely dy*; But that wicked man repents of his sins, and turns from evill; And then God reverseth his Sentence, *He shall surely live and not dy*.

Sometimes the Condition is not expressed, but is *Included*, and so to be understood: So *Gen. 20. 3*. *Abimelech*, thou art but a *dead man*, because of the Woman which thou hast taken: He conceiveth a right of this commination, restoreth *Abraham* his wife untouched; *Abraham* prays for him, and *Abimelech* was spared, and he and his Family were healed, *v. r. 17*. In the daies of *Hezekiah*, God threatned that *Zion should be as a plowed field, and Jerusalem layed on heaps, and the mountains of the House, the high places of a Forrest*; i. e. the Temple should be ruined; the City desolated; and the whole Kingdom utterly overthrow: Here no Condition was expressed; but the King, and his People, understood that threatening to be Conditionall, and therefore they besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of that evill which he had denounced against them, *Jer. 26. 18. 19*. The like we have, *Isa. 38. 1*. *Hezekiah* was commanded to make his Will, and put his House in order; For thou shalt dy, &

not

Jer. 18. 7, 8

Ezek. 33.  
14, 15

Gen. 20. 3.

Ver. 17.  
Jer. 26. 18,  
19.  
Enlightened.

Isa. 38. 1.



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*not live* (saith the Prophet). The good King conceived a right of the message, (albeit no Condition was exprest,) *he turns his face to the Wall, prays and weeps*; and then God sends a new message to him, and addeth to his daies *fifteen years*, ver. 5. And such was that *Jon. 3. 4. Yet forty daies, and Nineveh shall be destroyed*: The King (though a Heathen and Idolatrous, yet) conceiving a right of this threat, fasted, prayed, and repented; and *Nineveh* stood 40 years, after that.

Ver. 5.

Jon. 3. 4.

And thus are we to understand the threatnings (Generally) that are made against Sins and Sinners. Comminations and Threatnings are the heaviest Texts that we can light upon in the Scriptures, and they are the saddest and heaviest Commentaries, (saith a great Divine of our own,) that a man can make upon these Texts. When God hath awakened a man out of his Dream, and rowed him up out of the Bed of his security, he suffers him to read to the *Quia*, but not to the *Tamen*: he comes to see a Reason of that Threatning, of that Judgment, that shall befall him; but not to see the Remedy: His Eye is carried to an hundred places of Commination, against such sins as the Land is guilty of, or himself is guilty of, and there makes a *Period*, a full stop. But he reads not with a *Comma*, he makes it not as an imperfect Sentence; he takes not in what followes, either expressly, or implicitly; he takes not in the Remedy, the Relief: Yet *turn to God*, by Humiliation, by Prayer, then *God will turn to you*. How heavy soever God's threatnings are against a Nation, or any Particular Person in that Nation, yet still there is room for *David's* Question, *Quis scit*, Who knoweth whether God will be gracious or no? *2 Sam. 12. 22*. There is no room for it, as it is a *Question of diffidence* and distrust; every one of us must know it and believe it, that there are Conditions upon which the Lord will be gracious: Be they spoken never so peremptory, and set down never so absolutely, yet God hath reserved to himself power of Revocation, in case he be sought unto by Prayer & Repentance.

Dr. Donn  
2. Vol. p. 71

2 Sam. 12.  
22.

Secondly, Know, that God's eternall Decree, takes in the *Means* as well as the *End*; so that, according to God's Decree, when his threatening of ruine and desolation is gone out against a Land or Nation; Prayer, and other Means, falling in to hinder

U u

Execution,

*Mutat sententiam, non decretum.*  
Greg. Mar.  
l. 2. c. 24.

*Object.*

*Resp.*  
1 Cor. 12.  
4, 5.

Eph. 3. 10.

Deut. 29.  
29.

Ephes. 1. 5.  
Ephes. 1. 9.  
Math. 18.  
14.  
1 Cor. 1. 1.  
Rom. 1. 10.  
Πάντα τὰ  
θελήματά  
μῃς. Act. 13.  
22.

Psal. 39. 9.

Execution, His *decree stands*, and the present *sentence only falls*. It alters not what God hath decreed to do, but effects it, and accomplisheth his purposes; Nor are his threatenings made voyd, and of none effect, when by Prayer and Repentance the execution of them are stayed; but then (rather) are they most effectual; for then they do most of all accomplish their proper end, and the thing for which they were principally intended.

But if God threaten one thing, and doth another, it seems that either he hath *two wills*, or else his will is changeable.

The Will of God is but One, as he is One; but as there is *one spirit*, yet diversity of *manifestations*; So this one will of God doth exercise and extend it self diversly, and upon divers Objects; and so it may be said to be *manifold*, as *His wisdom* is said to be. It is usually distinguished into *Secret* and *Revealed*, which Distinction is grounded on that of *Moses*, *Deut. 29. 19*. The *Secret Will* of God is of things hidden in Himself, and not manifested in His Word. The *revealed Will* of God is of things made known in the Scriptures, or by daylie experience and event; The secret Will of God is Absolute and peremptory without any condition, and always effected; no man can hinder it, the Devils themselves are subject unto it: (but that is secret, and not our rule to walk by); His Revealed Will is with condition, and (for the most part) is joyned with Exhortation, Admonition, Instruction, and Reprehension; This is said to be four-fold; First, His *Determining Will*, What shall become of us, *Ephes. 1. 5*. Secondly, His *Prescribing Will*, What he requires of us? *Ephes. 1. 9*. Thirdly, His *Approving Will* by which he grationly accepts, and tenderly regards us, *Math. 18. 14*. Fourthly his *Disposing Will*, which is the Will of his Providence, *1 Cor. 1. 1. Rom. 1. 10*. It is said of *David* that he should fulfill, *all Gods Wills* (for so it runs in the Original); resigning himself over to God's *determining Will*, as the highest cause of all things; resting in his *approving Will*, as his chiefest happinesse; obeying his *prescribing Will*, as the most absolute form of holinesse; and subjecting himself to his *disposing Will* with all patience: but all this is spoken to our Capacities, for the weaknesse of our understandings, who cannot conceive how God doth after a divers manner Will, and not Will, the same



same thing. His Will is still one and the same, and not two ; but rather two *several parts* of God's one and most *simple Will*, and are so far from being repugnant or contrary the one to the other, as that they do most fitly and subordinately agree one with another. But we hasten to make some Application of the Point.

If Gods threatning and complaining time should be our praying time, and his complaints and threatnings bring us upon our knees ; Then without question, there was never more need to seek unto God by humble prayer and supplication than now : God threatens us for our wickednesse ; calls upon us to behold the wrong that he suffers in his Name by our unprofitableness. *Behold* (saith God) ! and who can behold it with a dry eye, and merry heart ? *David* could not, *He beheld the transgressor, and was grieved* ; *Jeremiah* could not ; *Day and Night* he wept for the sins and abominations done in *Jerusalem* ; *St. Paul* could not, when he tells us of those who were the *enemies of the Crosse of Christ*, he could not forbear watering his Plants : *Christ* could not, He no sooner came within the view of *Jerusalem*, but *he wept over it* ; But woe to us for our wretchednesse, when God calls to weeping, and to mourning, and to girding with sack-cloth ; there is joy and gladnesse, slaying Oxen, and killing of Sheep, eating Flesh, and drinking Wine, *Ila. 22. 12, 13*. Such is the desperate carriage of many ; they jeer when they should fear ; laugh when they should weep ; sing care away, *let us eat and drink merrily*, sorrow comes soon enough, to morrow we may dye ; No other laying to heart of God's complaints do we make : but read what follows, *This sin* (saith the Prophet) *was declared in the ears of the Lord of Hosts*, as the top of all their sins, which caused the Lord to enter into that determinate resolution ; *Surely, this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till you dye*.

But we hear not God complaining ; When, and How doth he complain against us ?

The more stupid and blockish we, that we hear not : By word of mouth he makes complaint ; *Hear O my People, and I will testify against you*, *Psal. 81. 8*. But my People would not hearken, *Verse 11*. *O that my People had hearkened*, *Verse 13*. So,

U u 2

*Non est De  
Voluntas d  
diversa ; se  
loquutio  
diversa est  
de volun-  
tate. Mag.  
Sent. l. 1.  
Dist. 45.  
46.*

Use I.

*Psal. 44.  
15, 16,  
199, 158,  
136.  
Jer. 9. 1, &  
4, 19, & 13,  
17.  
Phil. 3. 18.  
Luke 19.  
41.*

*Ila. 22. 12,  
13,*

Vers. 14.

Quest.

Resp.

*Psal. 81. 8.  
Vers. 11.  
Vers. 13.*

Isa.

Isa. 1. 2, 3.  
Mich. 6. 3,  
5.

*Isa. 1. 2, 3.* O peircing words! and yet again, *Mich. 6. 3, 5.* (These onely for a taste). Doth not the Lord thus expostulate with us, and complain of us at this day for our unthankfulness and disobedience? Ah sinful Nation, testifie against me, wherein have I grieved thee? Remember how I brought thee out of the Romish furnace, Remember how I have blessed thee with peace and plenty, &c. *Do you thus requite me! Oh foolish People, and unkind! &c.*

Deut. 32. 6

And is not the Voyce of his Servants, (the Ministers of the Gospel) his Voyce likewise? *He that heareth you, heareth me* (saith Christ): Now, Is not the Voyce of the mourning Turtle heard in our Land? Do not the *Jeremiahs* of these dayes mourn over you, and mourn for you? Do they not in God's name come in daylie, with their Bills of complaints against you, for your Pride, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Blasphemy, Sacriledge, and other Abominations (which would ask much time but to name)? Insomuch, that God's *Mercy-seat* (I mean the Pulpit) seems to be no other then a *Tribunal*, a seat of Judgment. And yet do you ask, When, or Where doth God complain?

Luke 16.  
16.  
*Vox Tur-*  
*turis, Vox*  
*Gementis.*  
Cant. 2. 12

If the complaints that God makes against us by word of mouth move not; Then look upon the *works of his hands*: Open your eyes (you that have stopped your ears) and you may see him *qually* complaining. What are his Rods, his Judgments, but *real complaints* against us, for our wicked and heinous provocations? Famine is a complaint against us for our abuse of fulness; The Sword for the abuse of our long and happy Peace; Scorn and Contempt of other Nations, a complaint of our Pride; Sicknesse, of the abuse of our Health; Sometimes the *Heavens* bring in God's complaint, when they are as *Iron*: Sometimes the *Earth*, when it is as *Brasse*; when we sow much, and receive but little: Sometimes the *seasons* of the year speak their *Maker's* complaints: This last Spring and Summer hath complained of us, in coming cladd in the Roabs of Winter. These things (being thus,) if you view well the Evidence that is brought, you cannot but find for the Plaintiff.

Levit. 26.  
19.

Use 2.

It being thus, let all that have any Interest in God, seek unto him for mercy, and put themselves in a praying posture. God  
is



is ready to give fire to all his Artillery that is charged against us ; It is time to step in, and every one to take his *Censer* in his hand, (as *Moses* willed *Aaron*) and put in *Incense*, and make an attonement for the Nation, that God's wrath may be pacified towards it ; An humble heart touched with a deep sense of Gods dishonour, and the Nation's misery, is the *Censer* ; your fervent prayers are your *Incense*; and there is no such way, nor means so effectual, to appease the wrath of God, and stay him from executing of his Judgments threatened, as that. *Esther*, upon *Mordecai's* perswasion, went to King *Ahasuerus* (albeit with danger of her Life) and made Petition and Supplication before him for themselves and the Kingdom, *Est. 4. 8.* Have not you as great cause as She? and as much encouragement as She had, and far more? the *Golden Scepter* is held out unto you, you need not be afraid, Consider,

First, God expects this of you, *Ezek. 22. 30.* I sought for a man amongst them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me (saith God) and found none. And God wondereth at it, that it should be so, *Isa. 59. 16, & 63. 5.* that there should be so general a barrennesse of grace, as that there was not one man to interpose for his People, and sue for them ; It sets the God of all wonders a wondering : I doubt not but we have many that do stand in the gap (blessed be God,) yet I would there were more; for there is but few, or none that do interpose in comparison of them that do not, (for so *None* is many times taken in Scripture) : Bethou *One* of this *None*.

Secondly, The neglect of this is a dangerous and fearful provocation, and is made a great cause of the publique calamity, *Ezek. 22: 30, 31.* I sought for a man to stand in the gap, and found none ; Therefore have I powred out my Indignation on them, I have consumed them with the fire of my Wrath : Oh ! pray for the Church, the State of this English Nation ; and forget it not.

Thirdly, In all Ages, this hath bin the practise of God's Saints, by prayers and tears to seek God for the averting of his Judgments ; *Dan. 9. 16, 17. Jer. 18. 20. Isa. 62. 1.* When darknesse of affliction overshadows *Jerusalem*, and *Sion* is under a Cloud of trouble ; the godly cannot rest, they cannot keep silence ; they

Numb. 16.  
46.

Est. 4. 8.

Ezek. 22.  
30.  
Isa. 59. 16,  
& 63, 5.

Ezek. 22.  
30, 31.

Psal. 9. 16,  
17.

Dan. 9.  
16, 17.  
Jer. 18. 20.  
Isa. 62. 1.

they must importune the Lord for a glorious deliverance. And it is God's usual manner before he doth any great work for his Church, to stir up the hearts of his, to importune him by their prayer.

Fourthly, The practise of this Duty will bring much comfort to our selves; for besides the *publique good*, that may follow hereupon, (wherein we shall have our share, *Isa. 66. 10.*) there is a *private benefit*, that will redound unto you; you shall be marked for mourners in *Jerusalem*, and so saved in the day of destruction, *Ezek. 9. 4. Zeph. 2. 3.*

I shall conclude the point with that exhortation of the Prophet, *Ye that make mention of the Lord (Ministers, and others too,) keep not silence, and give him no rest, till He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the Earth, Isa. 62. 6, 7.* Every one help with your humble prayers and tears, make no other answer to God's complaints, but humble Confessions and Petitions, as did this Dresser of the Vineyard, who, in answering, made no other answer but this; *Lord, let it alone, &c.* And so we come to the words more particularly.

*He answering said,]*

*Text.*

The Person Interceding, was, the Dresser of the Vineyard; the Person Interceded, was, the Lord of the Vineyard: He answering, said, *Lord, let it alone, &c.*

Who this Dresser is, hath bin before shewed; The Head, and Principal Dresser, is, *Christ himself*: The Under-Dressers are the Ministers of the Gospel, the Servants of Christ, whose Office it is to digg about the roots of the Trees: We shall speak somewhat of both:

In reference to *Christ* (the Head-Dresser) we may take notice, of the Intercession which he makes unto his Father, in the behalf of sinners, (such as the Jews, represented by this Figg-Tree, were).

*Doct.*

*When God is offended, Christ steps in and mediates, and puts a stop to the present proceedings of Justice.*

*Zach. 1.  
12.*

Thus *Zachary 1. 12.* we read, that the *Angel of the Lord*, even the great Angel of the Covenant, *Christ Jesus* the Mediator of his Church, interceded for *Jerusalem*; saying, *O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on*



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on the Cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? Seventy years God had shewed his just indignation against that People for their sins; and had afflicted them with a miserable Captivity under the Babylonians: Christ intercedes for them, that God would proceed no further in wrath against them; God heard him, and answered him with good and comfortable words, verse 13.

Verf. 13.

And thus, Being upon the Earth, He made Intercession for sinners; So did the Evangelical Prophet foretell, (*Isa. 53. 12.*) speaking as Positively, as if he had stood by, when Christ made that prayer upon the Crosse, in the behalf of his enemies; *Father forgive them, they know not what they do*, Luke 23. 24. O sacred word! O blessed speech (saith one)! uttered upon the Crosse, by the Son of God, the Saviour of the World; and that in the very Act of his crucifying, when the blood did trickle down from his hands and feet, when his shoulders were rent and torn with whipping, his face swell'd with buffering, and when the pains of Hell had caught hold upon him; yet then, he prays, and is careful of his enemies, for those who were then like so many bloody hounds tearing of him, yea, *breathing Devils*, tormenting of him, crucifying of him, and bashing their hands in his blood; yet then, for them he prays, and that not for any one in particular, but for all, even the whole Nation of them: questionlesse, he saw many amongst them, who belonged not unto him; but amongst that wretched and seduced multitude, He saw many that were his, and for their sakes he makes intercession; and puts up this prayer unto his Father, *Forgive them*. Fain would they pull upon themse'ves the guilt of his blood, he deprecates it; They kill, He sues for remission and life; And now, that the Elements are troubled, the Lights of Heaven darkned, the Earth trembling, and all Creatures (in a sort) prepared to be revenged on so wicked a Nation; He stops their course, and deterrs them from their intended purpose, by Interceding unto his Father for them; *Father, forgive them*.

Isa. 53. 12.

Luke 23.

34.  
Guevar. de  
Mont. Calv.  
c. 3. 4. 5. 6.  
Pendebat  
& tamen  
petebat.  
Aug.

August.  
tract. 31.  
in Joban.

And what he did on Earth, He doth still in Heaven, in the behalf of those, who belong unto the Election of grace (but yet uncalled); *I pray for them* (saith Christ), *I pray not for the World; but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine*, Job.

John 17.  
19. 20.

17.9.10, And for their sakes, Christ now makes Intercession unto his Father, that he would deferr his wrath ; and that the World may stand, till that the number of his Elect be made up, (which otherwise had not stood to this day), and no sooner shall that number be made up, but the world shall be consumed with fire.

Of this Intercession which Christ makes in Heaven for us now, that He sits at the right hand of his Father ; the Apostle speaks, *Rom.8.34. Heb.7.25.* And it containes divers things in it : First, His *appearing for us* in the sight of God, and presenting of his Person in our Nature and his own, as a *publique person* : So, *Heb. 9. 24.* He is there said to *appear now in the sight of God for us*, alluding to the manner of the High Priest under the Law, who used to go into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the Holy of Holyes, with the names of the Children of *Israel*, written in precious stones, for a remembrance of them ; that he might be mindful of them all, in his prayers, *Exod. 30. 7.* So Christ being now ascended up into Heaven, the e presents unto his Father the names of all his Chosen ; doing the Office of a Priest continually, remembring the Lord of that which he hath done, in offering himself a sacrifice for us ; thereby (as it were) with strong and mighty voyce, craving for us mercy and grace ; *whose blood speaks louder and better then the blood of Abel, Heb. 12. 24.*

Secondly, His *undertaking for us*, before God ; and passing his word, that we ( being mindful of Reconciliation through him ) shall eschew sin, by his Grace, and not provoke him any more, as formerly we have done : Look, as *Judah* was both a *Mediator* to request, and a *Surety* to engage himself, to bear the blame for ever with his Father, for his Brother *Benjamin* *Gen. 43. 8, 9.* And as *Paul* was for *Onesimus* a Mediator, I beseech thee for my Son *Onesimus* ; and a Sponsor, If he have wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put it upon my account, I will repay it, *Philem. 9. 10, 18, 19.* So is Christ both our Mediatour and Surety, *Heb. 7. 22.*

Thirdly, His *pouring out of the Spirit of Intercession* upon us, which causeth us, by an unutterable manner, to make our moans and requests known unto God, *Rom. 8. 26. Gal. 4. 6, 7.*

Fourthly,



Fourthly, His offering up the Prayers and Praises of the Saints to God, *Rev.* 8. 3, 4. That Angel is Christ the Lord; in, and through whom, our Prayers are heard and accepted.

Fifthly, The presenting of his Will and desires unto his Father that, for the merit of that Sacrifice which he offered, God would be pleased to be reconciled with us, and put to his Seal thereunto, for our farther assurance, *Joh.* 17. 24.

Sixthly, The Assent and Agreement of his Father, resting in this Will of his Son, for us, *Math.* 17. 5. *Joh.* 11. 42. In short, the merit of Christ's death, coming between Man's Sin and God's Justice, is the Intercession, that he now makes in Heaven on our behalf,

Some conceive that Christ doth still, *preces fundere*, powre our Prayers unto God, as he is man, ( though not now after the same manner that he did it when he was upon the Earth; either by bowing of the Knee, or falling down on the Face, or *cum lacrima & lachrymâ*, with wailing and tears, sighs and groans, ( as he did in the Garden, and at the raising up of *Lazarus*, which was *Origen's* Opinion ): To make Intercession to his Father after such a manner, were derogatory to him ( as *Calvin* speaks ), nor is it seemly for that place of Glory where now he is: ) but that Christ, by his own Prayers, should not second the Cry of his Blood; and that he himself being alive should not joyn with it; seemeth ( to some Judicious ) nor probable: Let the learned judge.

The great and tender Compassion of our blessed Saviour, towards us miserable Sinners, may here be taken notice of; who did not onely ( when he was upon the Earth ) sigh, and mourn, and weep, out of a compassionate heart for us, ( as he did for *Jerusalem*, *Luk.* 19. 42. ) but continues speaking to his Father, on our behalf; and is become our Advocate to plead our Cause, and intercede for us, as *St. John* shews 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. yea, such a one as forgets us not, now that he is in Glory, and sitting at his Father's right hand; and this very houre, whilst we are speaking of it, he is doing of it; Intreating the Lord to spare us, and shew mercy to us; and not to stir up his wrath against us.

Should a man suffer all manner of wrongs and injuries, from the hand of his enemies, and yet be content to passe by them,

*Rev.* 8. 3, 4

*Joh.* 17. 24

*Mat.* 17. 5.

*Joh.* 11. 42

*Ambrose,*  
*Orig: Greg:*  
*Nazian:*  
*Tolet: An-*  
*selm: Pet:*  
*Martyr,*  
*Mayer.*

*Use.*

1 *Joh.* 2. 1.

and not onely so; but likewise to grieve and mourn for the miseries that are likely to befall, or at any time have befallen, the parties that so wronged him; and yet further to mediate and intercede for them to the Prince, or higher Powers, whom he hath a great Interest in, (and who are incensed against them) and prevail for them: This would argue a high degree of Love and Compassion in the Person that should so do; But this Christ hath done, and still doth, and much more than this, for poor sinners, *Oh who is able to expresse the loving-kindnesse of the Lord?*

Use 2.

But this makes especially, for the comfort of all true Believers, (to whom Christ's Intercession doth principally belong) who are very often cast down, and overwhelmed (in a manner) with doubts and fears, in regard of their manifold and daily sins, and unallowed failings: Let such remember, that the mercy of God is daily implored for them. Look how Paul interceded to Philemon for Onesimus; so doth Christ for every penitent and believing Soul; (and much more powerfully.) *I beseech thee (said Paul) for my Son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds, which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me, whom I have sent again; Do thou therefore receive him that is mine own Bowels. Perhaps he therefore departed for a season that thou shouldst receive him for ever; not as a Servant, but above a Servant, a Brother beloved, especially to me. If thou count me therefore a Partner, receive him as my self: If he have wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put that on my account, I Paul have written it with my own hand, I will repay it, Phil. 10.—*

Philem.  
10.—19.

19. Thus Pathetically doth Paul play the Oratour for Onesimus: But Christ excells, *Father, I beseech thee for this my Child, whom I have begotten again of Water and the Spirit, not onely in my bonds but in my blood, once a rebellious enemy, but now I have made him useful for thy Glory; Whom I have brought back again to thee, that thou maist receive him for ever into favour: Good Father receive him, shut him not out, but open the everlasting doors of Mercy to him; he is as near me as my own Bowels, let him be so to thee, he is not onely a Servant, but a Brother, a beloved Brother to me especially: The Glory which thou hast given me, I have given him: If thou countest me a Partner with thee in thy Glory, receive him as my self, admit him into thine own Blessednesse, As thou art in*



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me and I in thee, so let him be one in Us; if he hath wronged thee, or owe ought to divine Justice, put that on my account, I will pay it, take my reckoning on the Cross for it. I Jesus have written it on the Cross with mine own blood, the Pen being a spear's Point; I will pay thee all.

There are but few such *Pauls* alive, as he was; he dyed long since, and left not his like upon the Earth: But our comfort is, that our *Jesus* is yet alive; He lives, and will ever live, thus to intercede his Father on our behalf, *Heb. 7. 25.* When thou offendest God, and provokest him to wrath, then he steps in, between his Father's wrath and thee, that it cannot break forth upon thee. And as *Moses* held the hands of God, so doth Christ the hands of his Father: whilst his hands are up, God cannot destroy, and his hands are up continually on thy behalf. He is daily and continually exercised, in making Intercession by the merit of his death and Passion, not onely for all God's Elect and choien ones (ingeneral), but for every particular Person, and that particularly; He lives on purpose to perform this work; It is the end of his businesse, the businesse of his life now in Heaven; as the Apostle there intimates, *Heb. 7. 25.*

Oh! but thou wilt say, my sins are great and heynous, long layen in, often renewed, and many waies aggravated.

Remember what the Apostle saith (in the former place), *He is able to save to the utmost those that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them:* That word, to the utmost, (saith one) is a reaching word, and extends it self so far, as that thou canst not look beyond it; nor do beyond it: Shouldst thou climb up to Mount *Ararat*, to the highest Mountain on the Earth, yet thou canst not look beyond the Heavens; the higher thou climbest, the more of the Heavens doth appear unto thee: Let thy Soul be carryed (as Christ's body was) by *Sathan* to an exceeding high Mountain, and have a view from thence presented to it, of all the sins that ever were committed by thee, or of any whatsoever (as Christ had of all the Kingdomes of the World in a moment): Let all the difficulties of being saved, that ever yet any poor humbled Soul did meet withall, or can possibly imagine or cast within it self; and joyn to these, all the Objections and hinderances of thy sal-

*Heb. 7. 25.*

*Exod. 17. 12.*

*Heb. 7. 25.*

*Object.*

*Resp.*

*Tho: Goodwin.*

*Mat. 4. 8.*

vation, that thy heart can suppose or invent; yet Christ by his Intercession is able to save thee to the *utmost*; beyond the farthest compass of thy thoughts: Do but remember this same word, *to the utmost*, and then put in what exception thou canst: The *sacrificing part* is done and ended, the price *all-sufficient* for all the sins that were ever committed in the World: His *Intercession* hath now the place, and by it we get the merit of his death and Passion applied, and not by any new Oblation.

Use 3.

Heb. 7. 25.

Wherefore, Let it be your care to *come unto God by him*, or through him; the former comfort appertains onely to such as do so, *Heb. 7. 25*. He is the *Door*, and the *way*, through which onely access is gotten to God; by *Saints* and *Angels* we have not this access, but by Christ onely.

They, of the Church of *Rome*, would perswade us otherwise; they tell us that Christ indeed is the onely Mediatour betwixt God and us, touching *Redemption*; but there be other Mediators of *Intercession*, namely, *Saints* and *Angels*, who, albeit they be not the Redeemers of the World, yet they are as the Courtiers of Heaven, and speak a good word for us, and so may be come unto, by us.

But what warrant have they for this distinction in the word? That *Saints living* on Earth, may intercede for us; (and How, we shall shew you anon,) but that the *Saints departed* do it for any particular Person, we utterly deny.

1 Joh. 2. 1.

1 Tim. 2. 4.

Secondly, The Scripture tells us expressly, that there is but *one Advocate*, 1 Joh. 2. 1. and *one Mediator between God and Man*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. and no more; and (which is to be observed) that in the same place, where the Apostle St. Paul tells us of *one Mediatour betwixt God and Man*, the Subject that then he intreats of, is *Prayer*; so that, even in Prayer, he would not that we should acknowledge any other *Mediator of Intercession*, but Christ alone.

Thirdly, The *Higb-Priest* under the Law was typically Mediator, both of *Remission* by Sacrifice, and of *Intercession* by *Prayer*; and to deny Christ this, is to rob him of the honour of his *Priesthood*, whose Priest-hood is *everlasting*.

Fourthly,



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Fourthly, To communicate Christ's Priest-hood, or any part thereof, with any other besides his own Person, or use any other Mediator for Intercession, besides him; is (in effect) to deny (that which Scripture speaks,) that Christ is able to the *utmost* to save those that come unto God through him.

But (to follow this chase no farther) let us not partake with them in their error, but cleave close to the Intercession and Mediation, which God hath ordained for us, in the Person of Jesus Christ; resting assured, that he is both *willing* to step between God and us, and *able* to procure us favour, in the sight of God his Father, and bring us into a state of Grace and Reconciliation with him: He is our onely *Master of Requests*, let us know no other if we would speed in our Suits: He is a Saviour *in solidum*, a thorough Saviour, and needs not any to come after him to finish what he hath begun; he doth not his work by halves. We are taught to conclude all our Prayers and Requests, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, in and through his Mediation, as did Daniel, cap. 9. 17.

Dan. 9. 17.

*Chennitius* tells us of a Man, who, having used the help of some of the Nobles at Court to prefer a Petition to the King, and being marvellously delayed; hearing a Bishop preach of going to God by Saints and Mediators, said, If it were in the Court of Heaven, as it was in the Courts of Earthly Princes, they were like to have but a cold Suit of it. But (blessed be God) it is not so: here by Christ we have access unto the Father, who will lead thee *by the hand* unto him, as it were, (for so much the word signifieth, *Ephes. 2. 18. & 3. 12.*) and he will speak for thee: Couldst thou be assured, that thou hadst all the Saints and Angels in Heaven, and all the Saints on Earth, joyntly concurring at this instant in Prayer and Request to God on thy behalf, intreating for God's love and favour towards thee: How wouldst thou be comforted and encouraged? But I dare assure thee, that one word out of Christ's mouth will do more with his Father, than all in Heaven and Earth can do; *In him the Father is well pleased*, Mat. 17. 5. He will not, cannot, deny him any thing that he asketh of him: *Say on my Mother (said Solomon to Bathsheba,) I will not say thee Nay*: So saith God, *Ask of me my Son, and I will give thee*; nor did he ever deny him the hearing: Wherefore say

Προσχω-  
νιν.  
Eph. 2. 18.  
& 3. 12.

Mat. 17. 5.  
Joh. 11. 42.  
1 King. 2.  
19.  
Psal. 2.

your

your hearts, and comfort your selves, with these things. Come we now to speak of the words, as they have reference to the *Under-dressers*.

*He said]*

That this is to be understood (secondarily) of the *Under-dressers* of the Vineyard, is evident enough, in that they are those who are appointed to *dress* it and *dung* it, and be serviceable unto it; so long as God hath a Vineyard upon the Earth. To these the head-Husbandman hath committed the charge of his Vineyard, (as before hath been shewed): Whence it followes, That

*Doct.*

*Faithfull Ministers may not be wanting, (neither are they wanting) in Interceding and Praying unto God, in the behalf of that unprofitable people which is committed to their charge.* This was enjoyed the Priest under the Law, *Numb. 6. 24, 25.* and practised conscientiously, *1 Sam. 12. 23.* *Isa. 37. 4.* the Prophet is sent for, and willed by King *Hezekiah* to *lift up his Prayer for the People.* So *Deut. 33. 10.* *they shall put Incense before thee, i. e. pray for thy People as well as preach to them, &c.*

*Num. 6.*

*24, 25.*

*1 Sam. 12.*

*23.*

*Isa. 37. 4.*

*Deut. 33.*

*40.*

*Jer. 7. 16.*

*Enlightened*

In which regard, they are counted and styled *Intercessors*, as appears by that we read, *Jer. 7. 16.* *Pray not thou for this People, neither lift up a Cry nor Prayer for them, neither make Intercession unto me; for I will not hear.* It was his Office and Duty to pray for them, and make Intercession on their behalf; But God was so offended with them at that time, that he forbids the Prophet to execute his Office, in that particular, as concerning the Captivity. Had he omitted (altogether) the Duty of Prayer for that People, he had sinned in that omission; but God having so absolutely and peremptorily inhibited him, (even thrice with one breath,) *Pray not, Cry not, Intercede not;* (shewing thereby the Immutability of his Counsell, and that the Captivity of that People was decreed and established of God,) He had sinned if he had prayed for them any more in that respect: This grieved him to the heart, *Jer. 14. 11, 13,* yet he goes as far as he might, *ver. 20, 21, 22.* He might and ought (and did as he ought) to pray for other Blessings of God, in their behalf; As that He would give them Repentance, Remission of Sins, Redemption

*Jer. 14. 11,*

*13.*

*ver. 20, 21,*

*23.*

from



from eternal Captivity ; Comfort and Patience in that Captivity threatned, and deliverance out of it in due time, according to Promise : He might, and ought (and did as he ought) in praying for deliverance from other Judgments, as Famine, Pestilence, &c. At that time there was a great Famine in the Land by reason of drought; and for the removing of that Judgment, and the blessing of Rain he prayed, (albeit he might not pray for the State of the Kingdome, that it might stand and flourish, and the Enemy not prevail against it, and that they might not be carryed away into Captivity) for after God had so charged him not to do it, he never Interceded and prayed for them (as before was shewed.)

Piscator in  
loc.

And that this is the duty of all faithful Ministers, thus to make Intercession for their People, (unlesse there be such a special Interdiction which we in these dayes have not) ; appears by that we read, *Jer. 27, 18. If they be Prophets, and the word of the Lord be with them ; Let them now make Intercession to the Lord of Hosts, that the Vessels which are left in the house of the King of Judah and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon :* As if the Prophet should say, If these men amongst you that say they are Prophets, and would dissuade you from serving of *Nebuchadnezzar* (whom God hath determined you shall serve) ; if they be Prophets indeed, let them do the work of a Prophet, in intreating the Lord for you, and making Intercession on your behalf, that his Judgments may be averted from you, or at least mitigated, and sweetned unto you ; and let them not any longer delude you, in saying You shall not serve the King of *Babylon* : for in so saying, they Prophecie a lye unto you. And so under the Gospel, Ministers are to intercede : so did *Paul*, *Rom. 10, 1.* Christ hath given us an example, *Joh. 17.*

*Jer. 27, 18.*  
Explained.

Verse 14.

*Rom. 10, 1*  
*John 17.*

But if these Intercede, how is Christ our only Mediatour and Intercessor ?

Quest.

*Intercede*, is properly a Latine word, and signifieth to come betwixt, and so to Lett, Hinder, Withstand, or Prohibit the doing of a thing. It hath sometimes a more large signification : so the prayers which the godly make in the name of Christ, to turn away God's Judgments from their Brethren in this World, are termed *Intercessions*, *2 Tim. 2, 1.* And these are *Intercessions of Charity.*

*Inter et  
cedo.*  
*Cameron: de  
p. 122.*  
*Eccles.*  
*1 Tim. 2, 1.*

But

1 Joh. 2. 2.

2 Cor. 4.  
20.

But usually and *more strictly*, it signifieth that part of the Mediation of Christ, in which he appears before God to prevent, or pacifie his displeasure towards his Elect (of which we spake before); And this is out of *Justice* or *Authority*. To be such an Intercessor, belongs to Christ alone, because Intercession as it is a *publique* and *authoritative Act*, is founded upon the satisfactory merits of the Person interceding: He cannot be a right *Advocate*, who is not a *Propitiation* also; Therefore the Papists are forced to venture so far, as to affirm that the *Intercession* of the *Saints in Heaven* with God for us, is grounded upon the virtue of their own merits: But thus, Christ onely is our Intercessor, and no other; neither in Earth nor Heaven. The things we pray for (either for our selves or others) are unmerited of us, and undeserved by us; therefore, we put them up in His name, we expect them, *ex vi promissi*, out of Gods gracious promise, and not *ex vi pretii*, out of any price or purchase by us paid or made; such *meritorious Mediators*, Gods Ministers are not: they are but *Ministerial Mediators* and *Intercessors* under Christ, wherein (indeed) they are preferred before others in nearnesse to Christ; and have (as *Nazianzen* speaks) *μεσσητεῖαν θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις*, a Mediation between God and Man.

For the further Explication and Confirmation of the Point, Let me shew you: First, *wherein* this Intercession of Gods Ministers doth consist, and then the *Grounds* and *Reasons* of it.

The intercession of Gods Ministers for their People, stands in two things; First, In *speaking betwixt both*, interpreting the mind of one unto another, from God to Man; and from Man again to God; Secondly, In *interposing* betwixt both, when God is offended and displeased with Man.

Luke 1. 70.

Exod. 20.

19.

Deut. 5. 27,

28.

Math. 10.

20.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

They speak *from God to Man*, and so they are *His Voyce to Us*, Luke 1. 70. Him we cannot hear in His own Voyce and live: *Speak thou with us* (said the People of Israel to Moses) *and we will hear, but let not God speak any more with us, lest we dye*; which desire of theirs was well approved of by the Lord: In like manner, God having respect to our Infirmities, is graciously pleased to acquaint us with his good pleasure, by men like our selves: *It is not you that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you*, (as Christ spake to his Disciples, *Math. 10. 20.*)

We



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we pray you in Christ's stead (saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 20.)

They speak from Men, and for Men, to God; and so they are Man's Voice to Him; presenting their Persons and Causes before him, when they come into his presence. Thus Aaron was enjoined to bear the names of the Children of Israel, upon his Pectoral, when he came before the Lord to minister, for a memorial before the Lord for ever, *Exod. 28, 29.* So every Faithful Pastor is mindful of his Flock, and carries it upon his heart, not onely to his Pulpit, but to his Study: When he studyes, he remembers them, and prays for them; when he meditates on them, he prays for them: In Publique he prays for them; in Private he neglects not that Duty. St. Paul mentioned the Romans, *alwayes in his prayers, Rom. 1. 9.* In every prayer of his (Publique or Private) he had the *Philippians* in remembrance, *making request for them all, with Joy, Philip. 1. 4, 5.* Look as the tender hearted Mother prays for her Babe, when she suckles it, when she dresseth it; takes it up, or layes it down (which prayers are usually wanting, when she puts it forth to Nurse): So is it with a Faithful Pastor; though it be otherwise with those, who turn over their Flocks unto another man's care.

Secondly, They Intercede by *Interposing in time of danger* betwixt God & the People, when the Almighty is incensed against them, through their manifold provocations. This is enjoined, *Joel 2. 17.* Thus did Moses, *Exod. 32. 10, 11.* and *Numb. 14. 12, 13.* Hear what the Psalmist speaks of him, *Psal. 106. 23.* *He said he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen Minister stood before him in the Breach, to turn away his wrath lest he should destroy them;* Where Moses is compared to a Valiant Captain, Who, when the besieging Enemy hath made a breach in the wall, and the City is like to be lost suddenly, steps into the Breach, and makes it good, keeping the Enemy from entring: Thus likewise did Aaron, *Numb. 16. 47, 48.* A Plague being begun amongst the People, for their murmuring (whereof 14000 and 700 dyed), he by the appointment of Moses runs unto his Censer, takes fire from the Altar, and puts Incense therein, and so (with It in his hand) stands betwixt the Living and the Dead, whereupon the Plague was stayed: Of which passage, *Wisdom*

Y y

gives

*Exod. 28. 29.*

*Rom. 1. 9.*

*Phil. 1. 4, 5*

*Joel 2. 17.*

*Exod. 32.*

*10, 11.*

*Numb. 14.*

*12, 13.*

*Psal. 106.*

*23.*

*Explained.*

*Numb. 16.*

*47, 38.*

wisd. 18.  
21.

*Non vis, sed  
precibus ar-  
matu; non  
ferro, sed  
fide & vo-  
tis.*

Exod. 32.  
11, 12, 13.  
Exod. 9.  
Neh. 9.  
Dan. 9.  
Levit. 5, 6.

Luke 23.  
34.  
2 Sam. 24.  
17.

Jer. 14, 13.

gives us an excellent Paraphrase. *The blameless man made haste and defended them, and took the weapons of his Ministration, even Prayer; and the Reconciliation by the Perfume, and sett himself against the wrath, and so brought the misery to an end: For he overcame not with multitude, with bodily Power, nor, with force of Weapons; but with the Word he subdued him that punished, or overcome the Destroyer.*

More particularly, *Three manner of ways they Interpose betwixt God's wrath, and a sinful People.*

First, *By confessing of their People's guiltinasse*, humbly craving pardon in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ of all their sins, urging God with his Covenant and Promise, and putting him in mind of his ancient mercies, as we may read at large, *Exod. 32. 11, 12, 13. Ezra. 9. Neh. 9. and Dan. 9.* This was enjoyed the Priest under the Law, *Levit. 5, 6.*

Secondly, *By excusing their People*, what may be: Sometimes imputing their sins to their ignorance and weakness, as our Saviour did the fact of the Jews, in crucifying of him: *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do; Luke 23.* Sometimes by laying the blame on others; *David to excuse the People, took all the fault upon himself: Loe I have sinned, and done wickedly; but these Sheep what have they done? 2 Sam. 24. 17.* Albeit the Text tells us plainly that it was *their sins*, that gave occasion of their Princes fall, and was the cause of their own punishment, *vers. 1.* And *Jeremiah* imputes the disobedience of the People to their seducing Teachers; *Ah Lord God, Behold, the Prophets say unto them, You shall not see the Sword, neither shall you have Famine, but I will give you assured Peace in this Place, Jer. 14. 13.* As if he should have said, Lord thy People are misled by their blind and wicked guides; they would be better, and had done better, had they bin better taught.

Thirdly, *By ingaging themselves for their People*, and undertaking for their future amendment; Thus did the *Dresser* mentioned in my Text, He undertakes for this Figg-Tree; *I will digg about it, and dung it, and if it bear fruit, well: As if he should have said, Thou shalt then well see, that thou shalt have no cause to repent thee of thy patience and forbearance (of which words more in due place).* And thus you have heard, how God's

Faith-



Faithful Ministers Intercede for their People, and wherein their Intercession (principally) consists: Let me now shew you briefly the Grounds or Reasons of the Point.

First, They are hereunto called, and appointed by God: The Priest was taken from amongst men (saith the Apostle), and Ordained for men in things appertaining to God, that he may offer both Gifts and Sacrifice for sin, Heb. 5. 1. In like manner all Ministers of the Gospel are taken from amongst men, and ordained for the good of men, not in matters of this Life, but in the business betwixt God and them, that they may offer up (not an external propitiatory Sacrifice for sin, as they of the Roman Church would have it, but) those Spiritual Sacrifices and Prayers and Intercessions unto God, on their People's behalf. He is a Prophet, and He shall pray for thee, was the Language of Elder times. To this they are called, and cannot but make conscience of their Duty, if they be faithful.

Heb. 5. 1.

Gen. 20. 7.

Secondly, Ministers, (if Faithful) dearly affect their People and esteem them (as Cornelia did her Gracchi) for their chiefest Ornaments: What is our Hope, our Joy, our Crown of Rejoycing (saith the Apostle)? 1 Thes. 2. 19, 20. Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming: ye are our Glory and our Joy. Now whom we affect, we pray for, plead for, and excuse what may be; The Child is oftentimes wayward and forward, the tender Mother rocks it, sings it, excuseth it; It doth not use to be thus, it hath the fret, or some pin pricks it, or it is breeding teeth; it shall be any thing, but what it is indeed, forwardness: This affection carryed St. Paul to so high a pitch, as that he could wish himself accursed for his Brethrens sake, Rom. 9. 3. and caused him (with the rest of the Apostles) to be so desirous of their Peoples good, as that they were willing not onely to impart the Gospel to them, but also their own souls, 1 Thes. 2. 8.

1 Thes. 2. 19, 20.

Rom. 9. 3.

1 Thes. 2. 8.

Thirdly, Faithful Ministers are conscious to themselves of their own saylings; None so careful, but have cause to finite upon their rhiges for some neglects in their Ministerial service: This Dresser feareth his own saylings, and however the Owner charged the Figg-Tree onely for its barrennesse, yer the Dresser (in the answer which he makes) seems to charge himself with some

omission of Duty; *I will digg about it, and dung it*; as if he should have said, something hath bin wanting on my part, in not husbanding of it as I ought; Let it alone one year more, and I will redouble my pains and diligence, and amend my fault. In this respect, he might Intercede for it: Thus much of the reasons of a faithful Minister's Intercession, for a barren and unprofitable People.

*Object.*

Rom. 11. 2.

There is yet one Scruple that would be removed, (before we come to the Application of what hath bin delivered) If Faithful Ministers make Intercession for their People, what may we think of *Elijah*, who made Intercession against the People, as we read, *Rom. 11. 2.*

*Resp.*

Two wayes may Intercession be said to be made against a People; First, When a simple and bare Relation is made to God of the sin committed: Secondly, When punishment is craved, and called for to be inflicted on them, as they have deserved. The Intercession made by the Prophet against *Israel*, seems to be of the former, not latter kind; He acquainted God with the Impiety of that People, lamented it in God's hearing, was sorry for it, and grieved at it; but he called not for vengeance to fall upon their heads, he desired not their ruine: for (questionlesse) he was better acquainted with *Samuel's* Rule (if he had not too much (through passion) forgot himself), *1 Sam. 12. 23.* God forbid that *I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you.*

*Peter Martyr.  
Beza.  
Paraus.*

*1 Sam. 12.  
23.*

*Calvin.  
Grynæus.*

If (besides the complaint made by the Prophet unto God) there be likewise a *secret imprecation* (as some conceive there is), and that he did *imprecari interitum*, with their destruction and ruine; then it was *spiritu prophetantium*, by way of Prophecie, he knew by Revelation from God, that Judgments were intended against that People for their Idolatry, and bloody cruelty; and so he framed his desires according to God's appointments: The like did *Jeremiah* Deliver up their Children (saith he); and let them drop away by the Sword; forgive not their iniquity, put not out their sin, but deal with them in anger, *Jer. 18. 21, 22, 23.* And, it was usual with the Prophets thus to do. We come to make use of the Point.

*Jer. 18. 21,  
22, 23.*



Such as are called unto the Ministerial function, should make conscience of their Duty, in putting up prayers to Heaven, in the behalf of their People, which (sometimes) may be more prevalent with God on their behalf, then any other part of their pains: that Prayer which St. Stephen made when he was stoned, *Acts 7. 60.* *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,* was heard when his Sermon wrought but little on them, to whom it was Preached; and so heard, as that it was (as we may religiously conceive) an effectual means of the conversion of One of his greatest Persecutors, *Saul, at whose Feet the Witnesses layd down their Cloathes,* as we read, *ver. 58.* *Augustine* speaks confidently, that if *Paul* had not bin enwrapped in those Prayers which *Stephen* made for his Persecutors, the Church had lost the benefit of all *St. Paul's* labours; and if God had not bin so intreated by a praying *Stephen,* the Church had not bin so blessed with a preaching *Paul.* The like saying hath *Fulgentius*; Great pity it had bin that the Church should have wanted, either the Person of the one, or the Prayers of the other. However, admirable was *St. Stephen's* patience and piety; others at such a time would have forgotten their Friends, he remembers his Enemies, and prays for them; yea, at that very instant, when they were stoning of him, and (which is yet more) he kneeled down and prayed for them, albeit he stood when he prayed for himself, intimating thereby, as the greatness of their impiety, which could not easily be forgiven; so the greatnesse of his own charity, in being more grieved for their sin, then for his own suffering; imitating therein his Lord and Master, *Jesus Christ*; Who hanging on the Crosse, yet prayed for his Persecutors, *Luke 23. 24.*

Is this the condition of any of us who are Ministers of Christ? Are we traduced, reviled, persecuted by those from whom better things are expected by us? Look we (then) upon the practise of our Lord and Master, and upon his suffering Servants, who are gone before; and learn to *blesse them who curse us,* and pray for *them, who despitefully use us*; as we are enjoined, *Luke 6. 27 32, 33.* This is Heroical revenge, and such was that which the Martyrs have taken. We read of *Mr. Saunders* in the Reign of *Queen Mary,* who being sent to Prison by that *B. B. of Winchester,* *Stephen Gardiner*; he gave God thanks, that had given him

Use 1.

*Acts 7. 60.*

*Si Stephanus non sic orasset, Paulum hodie Ecclesia non haberet.*

*Luke 23. 24.*

*Luke 6. 27. 30, 33.*

him at the last a place of rest and quietnesse, where he might pray for the Bishop's conversion. Oh! let us not be wanting in this Duty for them, Who yet are wanting in Love and Duty to God and Us: The Calf pusheth the Cow, yet the Cow Lowes after it, and is content to let down her Milk to nourish it; Be we a Sanctuary to them, who wickedly seek to drive us out of the Sanctuary of God; and (if it be possible) pray we them into the Inheritance of Heaven, who (it may be) would swear us out of our maintenance on Earth; so shall we manifest to the World that we are the true Disciples of Christ, who had Gall and Vinegar given him by the Jews, for the sweet Wine which he gave them to drink; and for the feeding of Mens Bodies, healing their diseases, &c. was (by way of requital) slandered, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, and at last crucified: Yet He stood in the gap (as you have heard) betwixt the revenging wrath of God, and those wicked ones; He caught the blow in his own Body, purchased an eternal Redemption for them, by shedding of his blood, that, believing in Him, *they might not perish, but have eternal life.* The Disciple is not above his Master; if any man will be perfect, let him be as his Master: If we that are sent to dresse the Vineyard, and to Husband it, are under contempt, or under persecution; If the Sword of the Tongue, or the Sword of the Tyrant be drawn against us; against all these, *Arma nostra, preces & lachryme*, we must defend with no other Shield, return no other Sword, but tears and prayers, blessing them that curse us: And such weapons we may well have leave to use. Thus, as the Point concerns Us: Now let me shew, how it concerns you that hear us.

Joh. 3. 16.  
Luke 6. 40.

Use 2.

See the benefit that comes unto you, by these Intercessors! There are a great company of unthankful, and inconsiderate persons in the World, that are ready to object against the calling of the Ministry, as needlesse and uselesse; Why? Are not all God's People Intercessors, and enjoyned to make Intercession, as well as these? *you take too much upon you, ye Sons of Levi:*

Numb. 16.  
3.

It is very true, the Lord hath respect to the prayers of the meanest of his Saints, but yet he hath respect to the prayers of his Prophets and Ministers more then to any other; and their pray-  
ers



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ers are more effectual and prevayling, as appears by that speech of God to *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 7. *For he is a Prophet, and shall pray for thee*; And as sick *Abimelech* was sent to *Abraham* a Prophet for prayers, so are others in time of their sicknesse, by *St. James*, Jam. 5. 14. Why should People have recourse to them, rather then to other, if their prayers were not more potent and prevalent with God then the prayers of other? *Moses* and *Aaron* were amongst his Priests, and *Samuel* amongst such as call upon his Name; these called upon the Lord, and he heard them (saith the Psalmist, Psal. 99. 6.) Others called upon God as well as they, and God had gracious respect likewise to their prayers; But to none so much as to these, who were the prime Peers of the Church, and Intercessors for the People: *O my Father, my Father, the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof*, said *Elisha* to *Elijah*, Who was so powerful with God by his prayers, that it was said of him, *He could bridle Heaven with his Tongue*: And *Elisha* for his powerful prayers, was so styled by King *Joash*, as if all the safety and strength of *Israel* lay in their frequent prayers. This difference may be put between the prayers of God's Ministers, and the prayers of private Persons; Lay-devotions or the prayers of private persons, are as the *Infantry*, or the *Foot* of the Army; but the prayers of God's Faithful Ministers are as the *Chariots and Horse*, the very strength of the Battle. And therefore to say that there is no need of these is considerately said: for, so long as there is a Warfare on Earth, sins to be pardoned, a God to be pacified, Souls to be saved; there will be need of these: And those only have no use of these *Leigeirs*, that desire no correspondence or Intercourse with Heaven.

Others there are, who (albeit not so inconsiderate and wretched as the former, yet they) regard not these Intercessors as they ought; taking no notice of their Labours, Tryals, Sufferings; Their Persons, Work, Wages, is no part of their care; They leave them to themselves to stand or fall, sink or swim; as if they were nothing interested in their well-fare and happy estate. *O tempora, o mores!*

The People of *Millain* were so affected to *Ambrose* in his time, as that *mallent amittere animas quam Episcopum*, they had rather lose their lives, then their Bishop; In those times

Gen. 20. 7.

Jam. 5. 14.

Psal. 99. 6.

2 King. 2.

12.

2 King. 13.

14.

the

the saying was, *Morianur cum Episcopo*, we will dye with our Bishop; Now the saying is, *Morianur Episcopi*, Let them dye, there is a good riddance of them: but the fall of the Minister (commonly) is the ruine of the People; Can the *Shepherd be smitten*, and the *Sheep not be scattered*? Can *Vision* fail, and the *Prophet not perish*?

Math. 26.  
31.  
Prov. 29.  
18.

We read in History, that when *Philip* besieged *Athens*, He sent unto the Citizens, and told them, that if they would deliver up their Orators (the troublers of their Peace), He would raise his Siege and depart; But *Demosthenes* smelling out the Plot, sent him this answer, That the Wolves on a time came to treat with the Shepherds about a League, and willed them to deliver up their Doggs, from whom (said they) all the discord that is betwixt us doth arise, and we will be Friends: The Doggs were delivered up; Shepherds secure; Peace made; but the Lambs in short time after were all devoured: I shall not need to apply it; could *Sathan* but get these ridd out of the way, could he drive the Watchmen out of the Tower, turn the Dresser out of the Vineyard, stop the mouthes of these Intercessors, and cause them to be silent; you may imagine what will follow; if you cannot, read *Ezek. 22. 30, 31.* and that will informe you:

Ezek. 22.  
30, 31.

Psal. 36. 13.

There is yet another sort worse then either of the former, to be reproved; of whom these Intercessors may say, as *David* did of his Enemies, *Psal. 35. 13.* *As for me, when they were sick I Cloathed my self with Sack-loath, &c. But in my adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together; yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not, verse 15.* Whilst these Intercessors have bin bowing their knees to God on their behalf, they have bin beating their brains in devising mischief, and finding out matter whereof to accuse them, that they may be compelled to leave both their Places and Callings, whose worth they have not seen till they were gone, and then (as it is with some Stuffs which have the best glosse a good way off) they have wished for them again, As the *Florentines* did for *Benedict Albertus*, whom they banished from amongst them, but after his death, they confessed their error; fetched home his bones, and buried them with solemn pomp, bewayling their losse.

Ier. 18. 18.

And



And have we not yet amongst us, such, as spare not to revile and slander them: and cast about, which way to defraud them of that maintenance, which both Law and Conscience hath allotted to them, and layd out for the maintenance of them and theirs, as wages for their honest Labour? Is it not enough that (like him who went from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*) they be wounded by Theeves, but that they must suffer Violence at the hands of their Neighbours and Familiars? But herein I spare you, at present.

I cannot but take up a Lamentation, for thee ungrateful *England*, and bewaile thy misery; who makest them the subject of thy hatred and derision, who for many years together have bin the means of thy preservation; and castest no other Eye upon them, than the Eye of scorn and envy, whose Eyes and Hearts have bin so often lifted up to Heaven for thy well-fare; To account them no other then the *scum* and off-scouring of all things, to whom thou owest thy self, for thy long enjoyed happiness; Had not these stood in the gap for thee, long ere this, God's wrath had entred in, as a mighty breach of water, and like an overflowing deluge. What *David* said to *Abigail*, (when by her wisdom she had turned away wrath and destruction from *Nabal*) thou hast cause to say of these: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou who hast prevented the shedding of much blood; for in every deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, (who hath bin kept from destroying of us) unlesse thou hadst hasted, and gone out to meet the Lord, there had not bin left unto us (long ere this) any (no not so much as a Dogg) that pisseth against the Wall; we had bin wiped as a man wipeth a Dish, and utterly bin destroyed from being a People or Nation upon the Earth.*

Yet we are like to the Dogg in the water, who bites him by the hands, who would save him from drowning; yea, like cruel *Nero*, who after his Mother shewed him her Womb, to move him to compassion, unnaturally caused her to be ript up, that he might see the place where he had lyen: Whilst we shew our Breasts and Bowels unto you, and discover the affections we beare you; and the good offices we do, and have done, for you; Do not you pierce us, wound us, unbowel us? How will you an-

Luke 10.  
39.

1 Cor. 4.  
13.  
Philem. 19

1 Sam. 25.  
34.

2 King. 21.  
13.

1 Cor. 14. 7

25.

2 Cor. 5. 18

Mar. 9. 20.

Use 3.

Luk. 6. 28.

Heb. 13. 18

1 Thes. 5.

25.

Rom. 15.

30.

Gal. 2. 4.

3 John 10.

swer God for such tyranny and cruelty? *Balaam* would not deal hardly with his *Ass*, after he perceived that God spake by him; and shall we deal cruelly and unworthily with those in whom God is, and to whom he hath given the Ministry of Reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5. 18. who deal with God on your behalf, intercede for you, pray for you, promise, and undertake for you? The very *Geese* of the *Capitol* were respected, and maintained, by the *Romans*, for saving them, in the daies of *Camillus*, by their cackling: Though the Ministers of God be not respected by you for Conscience sake, yet me-thinks they should, for Policy's sake; If not for God's sake, yet for the World's sake; If not for the Soul, yet for the Body's sake; If not for the Churches, yet for the sake of the Commonwealth, let them have more respect than hitherto they have found from you; *Piety* is as the Body of Christ, *Policy* is as the hemm of Christ's Garment: Well were it, if these Intercessors, who can have little help by the *Piety* of these times, may (with the Woman in the Go'pel) have these bloody Issues cured by touching the hemm of Christ's Garment. As for these Indignities offered, we have learned to say, as *Mauritius* did to *Phocas* murdering his Children, *Videat Dominus & judicet*: So let God judge betwixt you and us.

I cannot yet leave you, nor the Poynt in hand, till I have left with you a word of Exhortation, which I beseech you suffer; Beloved, it is our Saviour's Rule, *Blesse them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you, &c.* Much more then, *Blesse them that blesse you*, and deal not despitefully with them, who make Intercession to Heaven for you; *Pray for us*, (saith the Apostle), *Heb. 13. 18.* and again, *Brethren, pray for us*, 1 Thes. 5. 25. and again, and again too; It is his closure in many of his Epistles. He doth not onely pray for them, but praies them to pray for him; and this he desires, not as a Complement in his Valedictions, but he desires it to be done heartily and earnestly, *Rom. 15. 30.* He desired not the People to pry into him; that should not need, enow would do that without desiring (as appears, *Gal. 2. 4.*). Nor doth he say, *Prate of us*; People are ready enough to do that; they can make Ministers their Table-talk; *Diotrephes* was such a Prater, whom Sr. *John* mentions, 3 Epist. ver. 10. Nor doth he say, *Prey upon us*; had he so said



said, he should have had a number of such *Preyers*, 2 Pet. 2. 3. but, *Pray for us*, as we do for you, as you tender the Glory of God; desire the peace of *Jerusalem*; and love your own Souls; Pray for us.

Oh that this English Nation had either more Grace or Wit, then would they not (with *Saul*) sling their Darts and Javelins at *David*, whilst he is seeking with his well-tuned Harp, to drive out the evil Spirits from them, but make much of such who are the hostages of her peace, and the earnest of her tranquillity. Thou art yet happy, *ô Nation, not worthy to be beloved*, that thou hast some in thee, who cease not to intercede night and day for thee: Oh that thou knewest thy happiness, at least in this thy day, by honouring their persons, procuring their peace and welfare; in putting up thy Prayers for them, that cease not, day and night, to sollicite thy cause, in the Name and Mediation of Christ, at the Throne of Grace.

If you would know the particulars, that you should crave from God on their behalf; I shall onely commend unto you, that excellent Prayer which *Moses* the Servant of God made on the behalf of *Levi*, *Deut. 33. 8*, — 12. There we have the specialties laid down; some respect their *Office*, other their *Persons*, and other their *Substance*.

As touching their Office, *Let thy Thummim and thy Urim bewish thy Holy One*, ver. 8. What the *Urim* and the *Thummim* was, is not easy to determine; *Illumination* and *Perfection* is that they signify (as is commonly conjectured). Questionlesse; *Moses* hereby signified the Graces that belonged to the Priesthood, which was committed to *Aaron* and his Seed, that they might be enabled to reach *Jacob God's Judgment*, and *Israel God's Law*, as he afterwards expresseth it, ver. 10. And we may understand him thus; Thou Lord hast seperated the Tribe of *Levi* to minister before thee, in the behalf of thy People; Oh furnish thou them whom thou hast thus chosen, with those excellent Graces which are requisite for their Calling; that they may be Guides to the blind, Lights to them that sit in darkness, Instructors of the Ignorant, Examples to their flocks, over which thou hast made them Over-seers: Many complain of the dullnesse, deadnesse, coldnesse, of their Ministers; but when did these

2 Pet. 2. 3.

1 Sam. 18.  
10, 11.

Zeph. 2. 1.

Luk. 19. 41

Deut. 33.  
8. 12.  
Explained.

Ver. 8.

Ver. 10.

2 Cor. 2. 16

2 Cor. 3. 5,  
6.

Hof. 4. 6.

&amp; 5. 1.

Rom. 10.

17.

Ver. 11.

Numb. 6.

18, 20, 21.

Num. 1. 46

compared  
with Num.  
3. 39.

Lev. 27. 30

Lev. 27.

26, 27.

Exod. 13.

13.

put up one Prayer to Heaven in the behalf of them? If we did but consider the weightinesse of the work of the Ministry, 2 Cor. 2. 16. Their own inability to discharge their Function, 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. The mischief that followes, and befalls the Church of God through the ignorance and prophanenesse of the Minister, Hof. 5. 1. & 4. 6. The great good that comes to us by a painfull and conscionable Ministry, Rom. 10. 17. We cannot but confesse, that there is great need that every one of you should pray earnestly to God, for all such gracious endowments and enablements, as may fit them for the work of the Ministry.

Something, in the second place, is prayed for by Moses which respects their *Substance*, *Blesse Lord his Substance, and accept the work of his hands*, ver. 11. Levi had no Inheritance amongst the Tribes, but they had the Lord, and his First-fruits, Tythes, and Offerings, for their Inheritance and Livelihood, Numb. 6. 18, 20, 21. and God was therein very bountifull unto them, more than to any other of the Tribes; For albeit that Tribe was the least of all the Tribes for Number, (as may appear by comparing Numb. 1. 46. with Numb. 3. 39.) The other Tribes were numbred from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to bear Arms, (which was to the Age of 50 years, for at that Age they were supposed to be unserviceable for War): The Levites were numbred from one Month old and upward, and yet the whole summ of them amounted but to twenty two thousand; Now, if we should conceive the number of those in the other Tribes, who were not numbred, (being under twenty and above 50 years of Age) to be but half as many as the rest; the whole number of the Tribes, reckoned from their Infancy and upward, will amount at least to nine hundred and two thousand men; of which number, the Levites is just the one and fortyeth part: And yet, though the Levites were but few in number, (being compared with the rest,) God provided for them a larger portion than he did for the rest; They had the tenth part of the increase of the Land, of Seed, and Fruit, of great and small Cattle, Levit. 27. 30. Besides, they had the First-born of all sorts of Cattle (as of Sheep, Beesvs, and Goats), and the price of the rest, which were to be redeemed according to the Priests estimation, Levit. 27. 26, 27. and more plainly expressed Exod. 13. 13.

Numb.



*Numb.* 18. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. *Neb.* 10. 36. And the First-fruits of four other kinds, as of the Sheaf, *Levit.* 32. 10. Secondly, Of their Bread, two wave-Loaves at the Feast of Pentecost, *Lev.* 23. 17. Thirdly, The First-fruits of their Dough, *Numb.* 15. 20. Fourthly, The First-fruits in general, of all things which the Earth brought forth, then payable, when men had gathered in their Fruits, *Numb.* 18. 12.

They had certain portions appointed them out of all kind of Sacrifices, either the Shoulder, Breast, or Skin, *Numb.* 18. 18. *Deut.* 18. 3. &c. The Meat-Offerings, the Sin-Offerings, the Trespass-Offerings, the Heave-Offerings, and the Wave-Offerings, were all theirs, *Numb.* 18. 9, 10, 11. All Votive and Voluntary Oblations, and Consecrations, and every hallowed thing was theirs, *Numb.* 18. 8, 9.

Incase of Restitution to be made, upon a fraudulent Act committed; If neither the Party wronged were living, nor any Kinsman known of his, the Restitution was performed to the Priest, *Numb.* 5. 7, 8.

They had 48 Cities for their Habitation, and two thousand Cubits of ground from the Wall, on every side, for the Suburbs, for Gardens, and for a gleib for their Cattle, *Numb.* 35. 2. (which Cities were next to the best, and in many places the very best of all;) when the greatest of the other Tribes had but 19 Cities.

Add unto all this, that whereas the Tribes were to appear thrice every year before the Lord; they were not to come empty handed, *Exod.* 23. 15, 17. Now, if we consider the Tythes, Offerings, and Oblations; the Cities, and other constant revenues that were coming in to the Levites, and put all together, it will appear, that, though they were but about a quarter as many as one Tribe, yet they had about three times the revenues of one Tribe. All which was paid them very freely and willingly by the People, as *Philo* the Jew (who was well acquainted with the Customs of his Nation) tells us, being confident that it was the onely way to be rich, to tythe well; and that the blessing of God would follow such as did so, according to that *Ezek.* 44. 30. *Mal.* 3. 10.

*Num.* 18.  
13. &c.  
*Neb.* 10.  
36.  
*Lev.* 32.  
10.  
*Lev.* 23. 17  
*Numb.* 15.  
20.  
*Numb.* 18.  
12.  
*Numb.* 18.  
18.  
*Deut.* 18. 3.  
*Numb.* 18.  
9, 10, 11.  
*Numb.* 18.  
8, 9.

*Num.* 5. 2,  
8.

*Num.* 35. 2

*Exod.* 23.  
15, 17.

*Philolib.*  
*de Sacerd.*  
*honor.*  
*Ezek.* 44.  
30.  
*Mal.* 3. 10.

This Substance was theirs, which *Moses* prays for, and desires that God would *blesse unto him and encrease*: he did not grudge it him, and say, *It is too much for Levi*, a lesse portion by far would serve his turn; It will make him proud.

2 Cor. 3. 8,

9.

Mat. 11. 11

How comes it then to passe, that the Ministers of the Gospel are grugged that maintenance, which both the Law of God, and the Land, hath allotted them for their painful labours? Is their Ministry lesse glorious? That it is not, (if the Scriptures may be judge in that case) 2 Cor. 3. 8, 9. And doth not our Saviour prefer the Ministers of the Gospel before the other, when he telleth us, that they are *greater than John the Baptist*, Mat. 11. 11. And yet nothing is more enviously grugged, than the Livings of the Clergy. The Gentry hath got into their hands already near upon three parts of the Ministers maintenance, and have left the Church but one Quarter, and yet there are those that would ear her heart with Salt (as we say) because she hath so much.

Psal. 137. 7

Pf. 83. 3, 4.

Ver. 12.

Psal. 74. 9.

Many Edomites there are amongst us, that say of the Church, as they did of *Jerusalem*; *Raze it, Raze it, event to the ground*, Psal. 137. 7. *Geball and Ammon and Amalek conspire against it, and consult how they may destroy it*, Psal. 83. 3, 4. But how shall this be effected? Why, *Let us take the houses of God into our possession*, ver. 12. No such ready way as that; that is the speeding blow: So Psal. 74. 9. *they say in their hearts, Let us make havock of them*; And to lay a foundation for that, *Let us burn all the Houses of God in the Land*: The Honey cannot be had but by burning of the Bees; nor Church-means, but by destroying of Church-men, and smoaking them out of their Hives. This (God be praised) we are not yet come unto; All the Houses and Synagogues of God, in the Land, are not burnt up, and consumed with fire; yet, but few of our Churches and Temples, which have not been robbed, plundered, and prophaned, in a very high degree: With *God's House* men began, before they went unto their Neighbours; And the desires of many look still that way, hoping to see, no, *not one stone left upon another*, nor one sheaf left for the maintenance of the Ministry: Such is the praying we make, for *Levi's Substance*.

But, take away his Substance and maintenance, you overthrow his Calling; and take away his Calling, what becomes of Religion?



gion? The free passage of the Gospel is to be prayed for, *2 Thes. 3. 1.* Now, the passage of the Gospel must needs be hindered, when *Levi's* maintenance is withheld, & he thereof defrauded. In this respect it was, that the Persecution which the Church suffered under *Julian* was esteemed greater than that under *Dioclesian*; *Dioclesian's* Persecution was against *Presbyters*, intending thereby to root out all Religion (as *Eusebius* speaks); But *Julian's* was worse, in that it was against the *Presbytery*, their whole race and renew, livelyhood and maintenance; He took away their Inheritances, and dissipated them into so many hands, as that without a miracle they might never return again to their right owners; as if he had vowed (saith a *Worthy* of our times) to sow Church-lands with Salt, so that it might ever after remain barren, and never bear any more fruit to *Prophets*, or *Prophets* Children. But I shall not strike any longer upon this string.

Lastly, Their *Persons* are prayed for by *Moses*; *Smite through the loyns of them that rise against him, and of them that hurt him, that they rise not again*; Protection and deliverance is to be craved of God on their behalf, *Rom. 15. 30, 31.* I beseech you *Brethren*, strive with me, that I may be delivered from them that do not believe: And again, *Brethren*, pray for us (saith the same Apostle, *2 Thes. 3. 2.*) that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, or, as the words may be rendred, from absurd fellows, and from their malice and treachery; from such men, whose Industry and labour is spent in bringing labour, molestation, and vexation, upon those who are the Ministers of the Gospel; nor do they care how grosse, vile, and absurd, they shew themselves, so they may compass their own wicked Wills, and overthrow the Truth. The malice of *Sathan*, and his Seed, is not carried with more eagerness against any, than against God's Ministers, whom he knows God hath made the chief Instruments of ruining his Kingdome; thence it is; that the hottest Persecutions have been raised against them, and soarest temptations have been directed to them: We must, and will, say with *Jeremiah*, *This is our Portion, and we will bear it*; yet it is your parts to pray for us, that we may be enabled to bear it; considering the Infirmary of our Persons, subject to humane frailties as you your selves are.

*2 Thes. 3. 1.*

*B.B. King.*

*Rom. 15.*

*30, 31.*

*2 Thes. 3. 2*

*Ἀποστολὴ  
πονηρῶν.*

*1 Cor. 16. 9*

*Jer. 10. 19.*

*Am. 14. 15.*

Where-

Wherefore, think it not enough, that you give us Audience, or Reverence, or Maintenance, but, *Pray for us*, that we may stand fast amidst the many Assaults of Sathan, and vexations from absurd and unreasonable men; Remembring alwayes, that the good and welfare of the Ministers, is the benefit of the People: In praying for them, you pray for your selves, and own safety: And it is the Tribute of thankfulness which is owing from you to them, who stand in the gap for you, and, by their Prayers and Intercessions, avert those Judgments from you, which otherwise would assuredly befall you; *How canst thou say that thou lovest me, when thy heart is not with me*, said Dalilah to Sampson? So may God's Ministers say to their People, who pretend much love, but do not once remember them in their prayers; Say not, you love me, when this duty is wanting from you. And so we have said of the *Person interceding*; now to the *Person interceded*.

Judg. 16.  
15.

Text.

Lord.]

Gen. 31.6.  
& 42.30.  
& 43.16.  
2 Sam. 26.  
15.  
1 Sam. 19.  
26.  
Judg. 3.3.  
Gen. 24.18  
Act. 16.30.

Joh. 20.  
13, 15.

It properly signifieth one that hath Authority, or one on whose Authority something dependeth; yet it hath divers acceptations in Scripture; It hath both a *religious* and a *civill* sense; It is a *name of Civility*, and given, not onely to Princes, and Personages in high places, as *Gen. 31.6. & 42.30. & 43.16. 1 Sam. 26.15. & 2 Sam. 19.26. Judg. 3.3.* but it is likewise sometimes, given to Persons of meaner Rank and Quality; It descends (as one observes) from the Scepter to the Spade, and implies not any distinction of Rank or Degree amongst men: *Rebecca* gave the Title *Lord* to *Abraham's* Servant, *Gen. 24.18.* *Paul* and *Silas* (poor Prisoners) are called *Kύριοι Domini*, Lords by the Jaylor, *Act. 16.30.* And when *Mary Magdalen* spake of Christ, to the Gardiner (as she supposed), she useth one and the same word (even the word used in my Text, *Kύριε*, Lord) to both, *Joh. 20.13, 15.* when she said, *they have taken away my Lord*, (meaning Christ,) and when she said to the Gardiner, *Sir*, *If thou hast taken him hence*; It is the same word too; and, in that respect, the word is englished diversly, according to the different condition of the Persons; Sometimes *Lord*, sometimes *Master*, sometimes *Sir*: but this reacheth not to the style in my Text, which is to be taken in a religious and Theological

gical



*gicall sense*, being given unto the Lord of the Vineyard, who (as you have heard) is God himself; and to him, this style of *Lord* primarily, properly, and principally, belongs. And so it is attributed to the whole Trinity, or to the second Person onely, in the Trinity, (as *Rom. 14.9.*) So our Lord, as to protect and save, *ver. 29.* And it setteth forth his absolute power, and sovereignty over all Creatures, *Psal. 110. 1.* Indeed it is a Problematicall and disputable thing, Whether God could be called *Lord* before there were any Creatures. *Tertullian* denieth absolutely, that he could be called *Lord*, till then: *St. Augustine* is more modest, *Non audeo dicere*, I dare not say that he was not, but he doth not affirm that he was: However, as the name *Kbe* answers to *Jehovah* in Hebrew, It is not onely the name of *Relation*, but the name of *Essence* and Eternity; and so it is a Name too great to be clasped in the narrow Palm of our Apprehensions. The name here is a name of *Relation*, and in that respect, the Dresser terms Him *Lord*.]

From the Letter of the Parable something may be profitably noted; This Servant gives his Master this style, *Lord*: So then,

*Reverend Names and Titles should be given to our Superiours:* Thus Servants have styled their Masters, as *Numb. 11. 28.* *2 King. 5. 3.* and *Naaman's* other Servants styled him *Father*, *ver. 23.* Children have used the like to Parents, *Gen. 31. 35.* *Let it not displease my Lord* (said Rachel) *that I rise not before him*: So *Math. 21. 30.* *I go Sir*; the same word is there, that is in my Text: So Wives to their Husbands, have given the same Title of Honour; *1 Pet. 3. 6.* and the Apostle found it so, as we may see *Gen. 18. 12.* And she is therein propounded as an example for all good Women to follow; In other Relations I might shew this, but that it is not the poynt I intend to insist upon; albeit it is a Poynt that might very profitably be pressed in this unmannerly Age, wherein matter enough is administered unto us to cause us all to turn *Quakers*; (I mean not, to be of the Opinion of that rude and unmannerly Sect, who will know, neither Father, nor Mother, Master, nor Mistresse, nor any Superiour; so as to give them civill Reverence; but) for the growth and toleration of such rudenesse, it is enough to make our hearts

*Rom. 14.*  
*9, 29.*  
*Psal. 110. 1*

*Doct.*  
*Num. 11.*  
*28.*  
*2 King. 5. 3*  
*Ver. 23.*  
*Gen. 31. 35*  
*Mat. 21. 30*  
*1 Pet. 3. 6.*  
*Gen. 18.*  
*12.*

Isa. 3. 5, 6,  
7, 8.

*Doct.*

Isa. 4. 2. 8.

*Gerherd.*

1 Cor. 8. 6.

Eph. 4. 5.

1 Tim. 6. 15

*Reason.*

Act. 4. 24.

Pf. 100. 3.

Rom. 9. 21

Pfal. 36. 6.

Col. 1. 17.

Heb. 1. 3.

to quake, considering what it doth presage, *Isa. 3. 5, 6, 7, 8.*

But we come to the sense spiritual : And so we learn, that

*The Lord of the Vineyard is Lord Paramount :* He it is that hath absolute Power and Dominion over All ; Lords, as well as others.

*I am the Lord, this is my name, and my Glory I will not give unto another, Isa. 4. 2. 8.* It is a Title, that is attributed unto God, more than a thousand times (saith one), nor is there need to stand long on the proof of this, See *1 Cor. 8. 6. Ephes. 4. 5.* where he is called *ὁ ὁ μόνος*, *the one or Only Lord, 1 Tim. 6. 15. Lord of Lords.*

He is the onely Lord in respect of Creation, so he is the Lord our King, *Act. 4. 24.* he made all his Subjects, yea, the Subjects of all other Lords ; yea, he made all other Lords, and that out of nothing : *Pfal. 100. 3. It is he that hath made us, and not we our selves ;* yea, he made every part of us, and we are not any part nor piece of our selves. The Potter hath power and dominion over that Pot because he made it ; but his dominion over the Pot of Clay which he made, is not so Absolute as God's dominion over Man. The Potter's Dominion is a *Dominion of Art* not of Creation ; for although he made the Pot, yet he made not the Clay whereof the Pot was made ; he hath power over the Clay to annihilate the work of his hands, that is, to destroy the form and shape that he did put upon that Pot, but he cannot annihilate the Clay as God can do ; that is the work of his hands.

Secondly, As God is the Lord Creator, so he is the Lord Protector, the general Preserver, of all that he hath made, *Pfal. 36. 6. Thou preservest man and beast ; Col. 1. 17. He is before all things, and in him all things subsist ; and Heb. 1. 3. He beareth up all things by his mighty power.* Should this great Supporter withdraw (but for a moment) his protecting and preserving power, the whole World would in the twinkling of an Eye come to nothing. It is true, that in a building one stone upholds another, but it is the Foundation that upholds all : So all the parts of a Common-wealth uphold (as they ought) one another in Policy ; All the Members of the Church uphold one another in Charity ; The Members uphold the Body, the Body the Members ; But it is thou, O Lord, that upholdest us all in Mercy.

Thirdly,



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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Thirdly, He is the only Lord, in regard of his Judiciary Office and Power, which makes him *Lord, chief Justice* through the whole World, *Psal. 9. 7. The Lord hath prepared his Throne for Judgment, for He shall Judge the World with Righteousnesse, and the People with Equity*; St. Paul appealed from *Felix and Festus to Caesar Augustus, Acts 25. 10.* Yea, and from them, and all other men he appealed to God, *1 Cor. 4. 3, 4. He that judgeth me is the Lord*: So David appealed from King *Saul* to this Judge, who is the Lord of all, *1 Sam. 24. 13, 16.* and Christ himself committed his Cause to Him, *1 Pet. 2. 23.* But there is no appeal from him: In His sentence all must rest, as being the supreme Judge of all, and by whom all Judges shall be Judged. All these three you have in one verse, *Isa. 33. 22. The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, and He will save us.*

Princes and Potentates upon Earth, Who have Lordly Power and Dignity put into their hands, may be put in mind of their Duty towards God, Who is *Lord of all Lords and King of all Kings*; and cause them to cast their Crowns down at the feet of their Supreme: for be they never so high, yet he is higher then they; *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be extolled, and his greatnesse is incomprehensible* (saith David, *Psal. 145. 3.*) and so is not theirs, their greatnesse may be declared (so *Rabshakeh* did his Master's, *2 King. 18. 19.* &c.) and *Nebuchadnezzar* his own, *Dan. 4. 30.* But in speaking of the greatnesse of this Lord, here is *Magnus, Magnus, Magnus nimis*, (saith *Augustine*) *Great, and Great, and Great*: he would fain (if he could) have told us how great, but had he said *Great, and Great*, all day long, what great matter had the Prophet said? But saying his *Greatnesse is Incomprehensible*, he gave over speaking, and left us to conceive what he could not utter.

Let man's Greatnesse, and Power, and Dominion, be what it will be, or can be; yet it is *not Independent*: *Domini sunt et Dominum habent*, Lords they are, and a Lord they have; still one above them, on whom they depend: As our life is beholding to the Fruits, the Fruit to the Trees, the Trees to the Earth, the Earth to the Rain, the Rain to the Sun, the Sun and All to the Lord, *Hos. 2. 21.* So it is here: The Child depends on his

A a a 2

Father.

*Psal. 9. 7.*

*Act. 15. 10.  
1 Cor. 4. 3,  
4.  
1 Sam. 24.  
22, 16.  
1 Pet. 2. 23.*

*Isa. 33. 22.*

*Use 1.*

*Rev. 17.  
14, & 19,  
16.  
Eccles. 5. 8.  
Psal. 145. 3  
2 King. 18.  
19.  
Dan. 4. 30.*

*August. in  
Psal. 144.*

*Hos. 2. 21.*

Prov. 21. 1.  
Prov. 8.  
15, 16.  
Psal. 75. 7.

Father, the Father lives by the Peace of the Country, the Country enjoys Peace by the wisdom of the Magistrate, the Magistrate is countenanced and warranted by his Prince, and the Prince himself is Ruled by God, in whose hand *the hearts of Princes are*; still one looks unto another, but *the eyes of all look up unto the Lord*: He giveth to all, and receiveth from none, nor depends he upon any one whatsoever, *Prov. 8. 15, 16. Psal. 75. 7.*

Math. 20.  
15.  
Rom. 9. 21.

Secondly, The Greatness and Dominion of man, is *not absolute*. He may not do what he list without controll, nor can he; he must look to be called to an account for his actions (be he never so great), but the Dominion of the Lord is absolute; It is lawful for Him to do *what He will with His own*; A Sovereign Dominion He hath over the Salvation and Damnation of men, *Rom. 9. 21*. None can call Him to an account, or examination with, *Cur ita facis?* Why dost thou so?

Act. 17. 27.  
Psal. 104. 9

Thirdly, The Greatness and Dominion of man is *not Universal* and boundlesse; It is listed and limited to some parts and corners of the Earth only, *Act. 17. 27.* which bounds and limits they cannot pass, no more then the Sea can pass hers without permission: Nor is man able to command the Host of Heaven, nor the Sea, to obey their will: But the Dominion of the Lord of Heaven is without bounds; He is a *great King over all the Earth*, *Psal. 47. 2*. Not Lord of such a Country, Barrony, Signiory, Country, but in *abstracto*, most absolute; His Lordship is *Universal*, over All. He is *Lord of Heaven*, the Owner of those glorious Mansions; *Lord of Earth*, Disposer of all Kingdomes and Principalities; *Lord of Hell*, to lock up that old Dragon, and his Crew in the bottomelesse pit. Yea, *whatsoever He wills in Heaven. Earth, Seas. and all deep Places, that doth He*, *Psal. 135. 6*. He *bindes the influences of Pleiades. and looseth the bonds of Orion*, *Job 38. 31*. He can presse an Army in the Clouds, and raise up an Host in the *Heavens*, *Judg. 5. 20*. He can blow His Trumpet, and cry to the dust of the *Earth*; *To Armes!* and an Host of Caterpillars or Cankerworms will presently arise to kill and to destroy, *Joel 2. 6*. He hath an Host in the *Waters*, every Wave is a Souldier, every Fish in pay to this great Lord, and ready to execute His pleasure; *Hell* itself is at His command, He

Psal. 47. 2.  
Psal. 135. 6  
Job 38. 31.  
Judg. 5. 20.  
Joel 2. 6.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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He raised up an Army thence, which He sent to the first-born of *Egypt*, *Psal.* 78.49. Thus, his Dominion is without bounds.

*Psal.* 78.49

Fourthly and Lastly, His Dominion is *Endlesse*; other Lords dye, and their Dominions can have no further, nor longer extent then this present Life. Those four mighty Monarchies had their times, and their turns, and their ruine, and their fall, as well as their rise: But this Lord is *Eternal*, and of his Dominion there is no end, *Dan.* 4.34. *Psal.* 102.27. *From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God*, *Psal.* 90.2. Let not any one (then) how great soever, Tyrannize over their Subjects and Inferiors; that *Caveat St. Paul* gives to Masters, would be of good use to all others that have Dominion; *Ephes.* 6.9. Abuse it not, but remember *you also have a Lord and Master in Heaven*, to whom you are to be accountable.

*Dan.* 4.34.  
*Psal.* 102.  
27.  
*Psal.* 90.2.

*Ephes.* 6.9.

And from hence let us be stirred up, to give absolute obedience to whatsoever God commands; It is layd as a ground of our obedience to God's commandments, *Exod.* 20.1. *I am the Lord thy God*, and because I am so, see that thou obey me: As for Inferior and Subordinate Authorities of man under Him, we must for His sake submit our selves unto them, but not absolutely, onely in the Lord, and no further, *1 Pet.* 2.23. This is to clear a Case, as that the Apostles made their very enemies Judges therein, *Acts* 4.19. & 5.29. To deny obedience in that Case, is not to resist Authority; but to resist the corrupt Wills and Lusts of those that abuse, and exceed their Authority: Power they may have over the Body, and outward Estate; but no power have they over the Conscience; That, is not absolutely subject unto any, but to God, and to other Superiours for His sake; It is not mentioned in their Lordship, but in God's alone. Nor are we our own men, we are not at liberty to live as we list, *Liberi non sumus, Dominum habemus* (saith *Chrysostome*), We have a Lord and Master who is over us, and whom we must serve, both in Life and Death, in *Living to Him, and Dying to Him*, *Rom.* 14.8,9. And they are blessed that do both, *Revel.* 14.

*Use* 2.

*Exod.* 20.  
1.

*1 Pet.* 2.13.

*Act.* 4.19,  
& 5.29.

*Rom.* 14.8,  
9.  
*Revel.* 14.  
*Use* 3.

Lastly, It may refresh the hearts of the godly, that their God is the Lord of all; The Majesty and Sovereignty of the Father, is for the honour and advantage of the Child; Let him be my King

King

Pfal. 144.  
15.

King (said a Heathen) who himself hath no King: So let Him be my Lord, who himself hath no Lord. Hear what *David* saith to his poynt, Psal. 144. 15. *Happy is that People that is in such a Case, yea, happy is that People, whose God is the Lord.* It is a great happynesse to be blessed with temporal blessings, (such as the Prophet had before mentioned,) *happy are they that are in such a Case:* but the chiefeft happynesse of all, the perfect, the consummatory blessednesse is in this, and onely in this, that *our God is the Lord.* Upon this our Sovereign Lord, we may rely; Him we may trust; He hath all Power in His hand, all is at His dispose, fear not; *The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.* Selah, Psal. 46. 11. And so much of the *Style* that is given to the Owner of this Figg-Tree. Now in that the Dresser seeks unto Him, and to no other, it may teach us that,

Psal. 46. 8.

Doct.

*The Lord alone is to be sought unto in our prayers, and by our prayers,* Psal. 65. 2. To Thee shall all flesh come.

Pfal. 50. 15

This course is warranted both by *Precept* and *Example*; By *Precept*, Psal. 50. 15. *Call upon me in time of trouble* (saith God), *Come unto me* (saith Christ), and no otherwise to me than as to God, who am both able and willing to ease you: *Math. 11. 28.* And to this he directs us by a form, *Math. 6. 9.* And every one that is godly must do thus, *Psal. 32. 6.*

Math. 11.  
28.

Math. 6. 9.

Pfal. 32. 6.

Pfal. 34. 6.

Pfal. 116.

2, 3, 4.

2 Chron.

20. 12.

By *Practise*, Thus you shall find the godly have done, *Psal. 34. 6.* *The poor man cryed, and the Lord* (to whom he cryed) *heard him.* *Jehosopha's eyes,* and with him the chief of Judah their eyes, were up to God only, 2 Chron. 20. 12. Throughout the whole Book of the Psalms we might shew you (from *David's* practise) the truth of it: So *Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel,* all have done so; no Instance can be brought to the contrary.

Object.

Luke 16.

24.

Resp.

But we read of one in the Gospel that cryed out to *Father Abraham,* Luke 16. 24

But what a One he was, and Whither he was gone, you likewise there may read, *vers. 23.*

Reas.

Gen. 4. 26.

Shall I need to render you any reason of this? If so, then thus: *Invocation* is the highest branch of *Divine Worship.* In the dayes of *Enosh* men began to call on the name of the Lord, that is, they began to be Religious, and Worship God, by calling on His Name,



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Name, (that being put for the whole worship of God). And Christ in one of His answers to the Tempter tells him, that God only is to be worshipped with divine worship, *Math. 4. 10.*

Again, the *Object of our Faith* must be the *Object of our Prayers*, *Rom. 10. 14.* that is, to him onely we must pray, in whom onely we believe; but this is no other then God, we must believe in, *I believe in God—*

Lastly, *None can help as God can*, Who is present in all Places to hear; ready at all hours to help, and is privy to the secrets of all hearts; which he must be that we pray unto. Nor can any help, where he will not, (as we have shewed you on that Parable, *Luke 11. vers. 7.*) No Child is up when He is a-bed: If the Creator helps not, no Creature in Heaven nor Earth is able to succour us. So then, None may be prayed unto, but such as can both hear and grant the thing we crave; but none but God can do that; therefore He only is to be called upon.

This confuteth *Pagans*, Who cry to their *Baal* from Morning to Evening; And *Papists* who direct us to this He-Saint or She-Saint in the time of trouble and danger, and sollicite them upon every special occasion; As in a common Plague, when Sword, Famine, Pestilence, is upon us; In perills by Sea, in perills by Land, in perills of Child-birth, in time of sicknesse, in time of all danger; for safety of our Beasts and Castle, &c. as appears by Popish Liturgies, and forms of prayers prescribed in their *Manuels* and *Service-Books*. But if we should ask them where we should find many of these He-Saints and She-Saints that they commend us unto, in the time of our need; would it not pose them? How many imaginary Saints have they in their Calender, which are so far from hearing us in Heaven, that they are not there? and so far from being there, as that they were never here. So far from being Saints, as they they were never Men; but are either *Fabulous Illusions*, or (at least) but Symbolical, and *Allegorical Allusions*. And put case they had a beeing on Earth, and have now a beeing in Heaven: Is it not best to go where we may be sure to speed? It is a strange thing (saith *Justin Martyr*) to pray to *Esculapius* or *Apollo* for health, as gods thereof, when they were, and must needs be beholding to others for all their medicines: or why should I pray to St. *Nicholas*

*Math. 4. 10.*

*Rom. 10. 14.*

*Use 1.*  
*1 King. 18. 26.*

*See Parab.*  
*East. Friend*  
*p. 110.*

for

for a fair passage at Sea, when he that rebuked the Storm is nearer to me then St. *Nicholas*? Or call upon St. *Anthony* for my Hoggs, when he that gave the Devil Power to go into the whole herd of Hoggs, did not do it by St. *Anthony's* leave, &c.

*Object.*

But say they of the Roman Church, Had we a suite to the King, we would be glad to have a Friend in the Court, and one that would sollicite our affaires for us.

*Resp.*

Acts 4. 12.

1 Tim. 2. 5.

1 Joh. 2. 1.

And that is our comfort that we have such a one in Heaven, Who is Christ, our Mediator; and that not only of *Redemption*, Acts 4. 12. but of *Intercession*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. 1 Joh. 2. 1.

*Object.*

But it is a presumption (say they) in a mean Person, to come either to the King, or to the King's Eldest son, without some other Intercessor.

*Resp.*

It may be so (and want of good manners too), if we speak of Earthly Princes and Suites; but it is a carnal reasoning from things Earthly and Civil, to Heavenly and Spiritual: God himself checketh such carnal Imaginations, and overthrowes the grounds of all such Arguments, Isa. 55. 8. *My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your wayes my wayes.*

Isa. 55. 8.

Secondly, Admit the Proportion should hold betwixt the King of Heaven, and Princes upon Earth; yet the Reason holds not; for we are invited to come to Christ boldly, and by Him to His Father: The King of Heaven hath commanded that we should mediate only by the Prince his Son; Now, what presumption is it to do as we are commanded? Nay, it is audacious presumption to go contrary to that courte that is enjoyned. Hath God commanded us to offer our prayers to Him by Christ alone, and appointed him to take all Supplications, and exhibite all Petitions unto Him, and will He take it well (think you), that we set up other new *Masters of Request* of our own devising, or seek a way to the way, or use Mediators to our Mediator? This God will not endure; For it is not only needlesse and fruitlesse, but superstitious, and most sacrilegious; for it robbeth God of a special part of his Honour, and wrongeth Christ in his Office of Mediatorship.

*Use 2.*

Wherefore, let us be directed and exhorted in all our Prayers and Supplications, for our selves or others, to seek God alone in

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the mediation of his Son: He only is *Omniscient*, and know<sup>s</sup> our hearts; *Omnipresent*, ever at hand, in all places, at all times; and *Omnipotent*, only able to help us, and most willing likewise to do it. O blessed, and thrice blessed be His Name, that hath graciously invited us, and called upon us, to call upon Him; and hath not put us over to any such, as Papists fancy to be Favourites: He is that Friend (spoken of, *Luke 11.*) who, when His Children were in bed, Saints and Angels asleep, yet hath His bed so near the Door, that no sooner do we knock, but He hears; and, albeit He may delay us for a while, yet He will not deny us; but will supply our wants, if we call heartily unto Him. Let us therefore say as *Jer. 3. 22.* *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Thus much of the *Persons Interceding and Interceded.* Now we come to the *Request* it self: Where in (as we have shewed) we have considerable, *The thing Requested*, and the *Termes or Conditions* on which it is desired.

Jer. 3. 22.

The *Boon* is, First, *Specified* [ *Let it alone* ], Secondly, *Amplified* from the Circumstance of Time [ *This year also* ].

*Let it alone, this year also.*

But why, *Let it alone*? Is this a favour? Doth not God threaten it as a Judgment on *Rebellious Israel*, that He would *Let them alone*, *Hos. 4. 17*? And was it not in Judgment that Christ said of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, *ἄφεσις αὐτοῖς, Let them alone.* *Math. 15. 14*? What means the Dresser (then) in putting up this Request, *ἄφεσις αὐτοῖς, Let it alone*?

Text.  
Quest.

Hos. 4. 17.

Math. 15.  
14.

Resp.

Indeed, there is no greater Plague (out of the place of torment) then to be so left alone: God seemeth to say of such a one, as the Father in the Comedy of His lewd Son, *abent, profundat, perdat, percat*; In which respect (saith a Reverend Divine), If God should give me my Option, to choose the torments of Hell, with hope to recover his gracious favour, or thus utterly to forsake me of His grace, and leave me to my self, I would wish rather Hell torments with expectation of deliverance, then thus to be left alone, and given up to the lulls of mine heart. This (then) cannot be the meaning; *Let it alone*, leave it to it self: But let it alone, that is, *hurt it not, destroy it not, suffer it a while longer to stand*; suspend the sentence denounced against it,

Dr. Solater  
in Rom. 1.  
vers. 26.  
p. 135.

2 King. 4.  
27.  
Judg. 11.  
37.  
Job 7. 19,  
& 10. 20.

spare it, and so we find the word used often, as 2 King. 4. 27. Judg. 11. 37. Job 7. 19, & 10. 20.

In that this Dresser doth not crave a reversing of the Sentence, nor doth He absolutely sue for pardon; He only desires a *Reprieve*, a respite of execution, and that upon Composition; [*Let it alone this year also, till I shall digg about it and dung it; &c.*] From thence we observe that,

*Doct.*

*It is as great a favour as can be expected or desired for a sinner, to be a while longer spared: Or,*

*To be let alone, and spared a while longer, is as great a mercy as can be desired on a sinner's behalf.*

This is all that the Dresser did desire, or could have any hope to obtain from the hands of the Owner: that, now after three years fruitlesse standing in the Vineyard, and Sentence passed against it for its barrennesse; a reprieve may be granted for it, and one year more cast in, *ex abundanti*.

Job 10. 20

Psal. 39. 13

Isa. 38. 3.

Verf. 20.

For the further Confirmation of this Doctrine, take notice, First, that the godly themselves have craved this at the hands of God, and begged it earnestly as a high favour and mercy Job 10. 20. *Let me alone* (saith Job) *that I may take comfort a little. O spare me* (saith David, Psal. 39. 13.) *that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more.* And this was that which Hezekiah with prayers and tears begged at the hand of God, Isa. 38. 3. and having obtained it of God, blessed God for it, *vers. 20.* And yet these had lesse need to desire to be spared, than those who live in a course of sin.

And this was all that the unmerciful Debtor did desire from his Creditor, as you find in that Parable, Math. 18. 26. *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

Psal. 103.

8, 9, 10.

Neh. 9. 17.

Rev. 2. 21.

Reas. 1.

Secondly, God's mercy in bearing and sparing an unprofitable People, hath alwayes bin acknowledged for a special mercy, Psal. 103. 8, 9, 10. Neh. 9. 17. And God himself aggravates *Jesabel's sin*, in not profiting by so great a mercy, *Revel. 2. 21.*

This may be further evidenced unto us, if we consider; First, Who it is that spares; Secondly, Who they are that are spared; Thirdly, the Fruit and effect of such a patient forbearance (if the right use be thereof made). For the First:

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It is God that spares, Who is infinitely Holy, and hateth sin with a perfect hatred; and (being so) it cannot but disquiet His Soul, and vex Him to see it, *Isa. 63. 10.* He is *fretted* with it, as we read, *Ezek. 16. 43.* Nor doth He spare, through want of Information, *2 King. 19. 27.* The like may be said of every sinner. He is every where within the hearing and the seeing of it; He sees all the abomination that is committed under the Sun, hears all the Oaths, & Blasphemies, of those who set their mouths against Heaven, *Psal. 73. 9.* Nor is He without Power to punish, *Nahum 1. 3.* It is not for want of that, that He spares, as *David* did the Sons of *Zeriah*: They were too strong for him; but we are not so for God. All Nations of the Earth are but as the *dust on the ballance*; but as drops of dew hanging on a bough, the least touch of His hand will cause them to drop into the bottomlesse pit, *Job 36. 18.* And withall, He is just and true; His Justice must be satisfied, His Truth magnified, as well as His Mercy. Truth, That pleads; What is God but his Word? And his Word is, *In the Day that thou eatest, thou shalt dye the Death*; and again, The Soul that sinneth shall dye for it, *Ezek. 18. 20.* Justice, that backs Truth, and urgeth, that, as God is true in his Word, so righteous in his Works; And, *shall not the Judge of all the World do right*, *Gen. 18. 25*? Now what can be expected? can we think God should deny Himself, and eat His Word? Indeed, God is merciful, but what can mercy do, but step in, and confesse that all that Truth and Justice speaks, is right, Onely it desires that the hand of Justice may a while be stayed, and not strike the stroak; perhaps the poor sinner may find out a way to satisfie both Truth and Justice, and so escape Death by means of a Saviour. Thus Patience and forbearance is as much as can be expected from God, Who is Pure, Powerful, Just, Merciful, &c.

Secondly, If we take notice of the State and Condition of the Person spared, It will appear to be a mercy: for what is a Sinner, but a condemned Creature? *Eccles. 8. 11.* Sentenced he is already, and that openly, (for it is *Enarrata sententia*, a published, a declared Sentence.) only Execution is deferred; condemned he is *by the Law*, which passed sentence on him, so soon as ever he was born, before he ever saw the Light of the Sun, *Gal. 3. 10.*

Hab. 1. 13.  
Isa. 63. 10.  
Ezek. 16.  
43.  
2 King. 19.  
27.

Psal. 73. 9.  
Nah. 1. 3.  
2 Sam 3.  
39.  
Isa. 40. 15.

Job 36. 18.

Gen. 2. 17.  
Ezek. 18.  
26.

Gen. 18.  
15.

Eccles. 8.  
11.

Gal. 3. 10.

Rom. 5. 12.  
14.  
Mar. 16. 15  
Joh. 3. 18.

*Rom. 5. 12. 14.* And condemned by the Gospel too, for not believing, *Mark 16. 16. Joh. 3. 18.* (from which Sentence there is no Appeal to any higher Court). Now what favour can a condemned man expect, or any Friend desire on his behalf, more than a Reprieve? Great men could not obtain it from the hands of their Inferiours; and if it be obtained upon much suite, that Execution may be deferred for a few dayes, it hath bin acknowledged for a high favour: We read that in the dayes of *Edward* the sixth, in the Lord Protector's Expedition into *Scotland*, of a Castle, which when they understood they were not able to hold Out, and that their Obstinacy had excluded all hope of Pardon, they Petitioned that they might not presently be slain, but have some time to recommend their Souls to God; and then afterwards be hanged: This Respite being first obtained, their Pardon did the more easily ensue (saith the Historian).

Life of Ed.  
6. by Sir  
John Hey-  
wood.

2 Pet. 3. 15.

*Si stitum  
puniret  
Peccatores,  
non haberet  
Confessores.*  
Aug. in  
Psal. 102.

And that is the third consideration, the Fruit and Effect of such a patient forbearance, which is *Salvation*, as *St. Peter* shews, *2 Pet. 3. 15.* that is, it makes to Salvation; It is the way to it, the means of it, and Argument for it. Should God strike so soon as wickedness is committed, Who should come to Heaven? Not one of us here present, but long since we should have bin in Hell; (Had God bin hasty, to mark what is done amisse, and have called us to an account in the days of our vanity). Thousands have bin saved through God's patient forbearance: Not a Penitent amongst us, but must acknowledge, that he owes his Salvation (in a great measure) to God's forbearance and patience: And the great Clock of Time is still kept going for this very end and purpose, that Salvation may be had, and the number of God's Elect made up; A time of Reprieval is therefore granted, (albeit Sentence be denounced) that, by using the means, a Pardon may be obtained, (which God is ready to grant, being humbly and sincerely sought unto); To which end he giveth us his Word to direct us in the way; (The Church is the place where Salvation is to be found, of it we must be made true members, if ever we be saved). His Works he affords for helps; His Ministers are our Intercessors; All these accompany God's Patience, whereby Salvation in the end comes to be attained. And thus you have some good grounds for the Truth delivered, *viz. It*



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is a great mercy for a sinner to be spared a while longer.

O! then, Let the Lord be exalted by us in respect of this his patience and forbearance of us; *I therefore hath the Lord waited, that He may be gracious, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy.* (saith the Prophet, *Isa. 30. 18.*) where the P. ophet gives the Jews an account, why the Lord suspended his Judgments, and stayed his hand in not executi<sup>ng</sup> those Judgments presently upon them, which had bin long before threatened, and foretold (by *Esay* and others) that should befall them; and why, He yet a while longer spared them; the main reason was, that he would be *exalted in mercy*, in his appearing to be gracious to that People. This (then) is the Duty that God expects from us, and it concerns us as much as any People under Heaven, with whom God hath born not only three years, but more then so many score of years (as hath bin before shewed y<sup>e</sup> u); notwithstanding our manifold provocations.

The Prophet *Ezekiel* doth notably describe the Patience of God by his laying, first, on the one side, then on the other a long time together, *Ezek. 4. 4.* First, he was commanded (in Vision) to lye on his *left side* 390 dayes, with the inquiry of the *House of Israel*, portrayed upon a Tyle, representing God's patience under the iniquity of the ten Tribes, for 390 years, (answerable to so many dayes) ever since their defection under *Jeroboam*. Then, when that was done (a Figure what God had done for *Israel*) he must turn him another while, and lye upon his *right side* for 40 dayes, representing thereby God's bearing with the iniquity of the *House of Judah* 40 years, *vers. 6.* Needs must this be very troublesome; we cannot lye one night upon one side without turning of us; but, O the Infinite goodnesse and patience of an Almighty God! who hath lyen so long under the load of our Iniquities, and we so far from easing him by our Repentance, that he is enforced (as it were) to ease himself by turning from side to side; from Mercies to Judgments; from Judgments to Mercies; *proving if at any time*, or by any means we would ease him of the load of our sins (under which he complains that he is pressed) by our Repentance and Amendment of Life: And albeit he hath shaken this Land soare, with his turning from side to side; yet still he bears, so that we are not ut-

terly

Use 1.

*Isa. 30. 18.*

*Isa. 36. 3,  
13, 14, 16,  
17.*

*Ezek. 4. 4.  
Explained.*

*1 Tim. 2.*

*Amos 2. 13*

terly consumed, albeit still he is wearyed with our abominations: Who could endure with patience, to be reviled to his face? boldly denyed, horribly blasphemed, but the Lord? Who would abide to see his Bed defiled, his Image defaced, Children butchered, Goods spoyled, Word despised; but this patient God? Let us then *exalt him* for his patience, and blesse his name.

Yea, let every Soul of us take notice of God's Patience towards him in particular, and magnifie his name for this mercy; Think seriously with thy self what thou wert, when thou first camest into the World; no sooner didst thou peep forth into the Light, but God might have sent thee into Hell: And how long thou livedst without God in the World; yet God's patience hath forbore thee to this hour. How many provocations God hath had from thee all this time? how many Lyes, Oaths, Blasphemies, hath he heard from thy foul mouth? how much wickednesse seen by thee, how many abominations seen in thee? yet he hath gone away (as if he saw not), and seemed to take no notice of what thou hast said and done, *Psal. 50. 21.* He hath *held his peace, and bin still*, and *refrained himself*, *Isa. 42. 14.* Yea, he hath hid thy sins from the eyes of the World, and had a care of thy credit; for should he discover what he knows by thee, thou couldst not but blush to look any neighbour in the face; they would shun thy company.

Consider further, that when thou hast gone on in thy sinful and impenitent course of Life, so that his hand hath bin up to smite, (his *patience* being even *weary with bearing*, *Jer. 5. 7.*) his *long suffering* hath slept in, and layd hold on the Sword of Justice, (as the Angel did on *Abraham's*) and pleaded for thee; Lord remember that *he is but dust*; It hath pleaded for thee (as *Judah* did for *Benjamin* to his Brother *Joseph*, *Gen. 44. 18.*) and hath prevailed so far, as that God layes-by his Sword, and bears yet longer with thee: so that God seems to say (as *Hos. 6. 4.*) *What shall I do? what shall I do?* and, *Hos. 11. 8.* *How shall I give up? how shall I intreat?* Mercy having got the Victory, causeth God thus to speak, *What and What; How and How?*

Thus God hath borne with thee, not three years only, but 30, 40 years, or more: he might have blasted thee *in thy spring*, but

*Psal. 50.*

*21.*

*Isa. 42. 14.*

*Jer. 5. 7.*

*Gen. 22. 11*

*Gen. 44. 18*

*Hos. 6. 4.*

*Hos. 11. 8.*



but he hath spared thee to thy *Autumn*, let not thy loosenesse bring thee to the *Fall of the leaf*. What is this year but the time of thy Reprieve; and not barely so, but in mercy afforded unto thee, that thou mayst get thy pardon, which (if thou beest not wanting to thy self) may be obtained. Say then (as, *Mich. 7. 18.*) *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* And confesse with the Church, *Lament. 3. 22.* *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fayl not.*

Mich. 7. 18

Lament. 3. 22.

But how few are there, that do make use of God's *Patience*? Some, instead of magnifying Him for it, make bo'd to question His *Justice*, in bearing so long with evil Doers: This was *Jeremiah's* fault, *Jer. 12. 10.* and *David's*, *Psal. 73. 12, 13.* and from thence he concluded (very rashly) as if he had cleansed his heart in vain, &c. But this is a great wickednesse so to accuse God: Put case a State should deferr the Execution of a great offender, apprehended and condemned, Would it be well taken, if any of us should condemn that State, or that Councel of Justice, for so do doing? There may be just cause, as of Reprival of a condemned Person, so of sparing a condemned sinner.

Jer. 12. 10.  
Psal. 73.  
12, 13.

Sometimes an Offender is spared in regard of some use that is to be made of him; It may be, to be the Executioner of some other; so God may spare the wicked for this end, that they may be as wisps or rods to scoure and chastise his own. Thus *Assur* was spared for a time, and was sent against a dissembling Nation, *Isa. 10. 5, 6.* God used him as the rod of his anger, and staff of his indignation. Sometimes God hath some good work to do by them for his Church and People: *Cyrus* was an ambitious man, a very Pagan, one that knew not God, and yet he is termed *God's anointed*, and God doth promise to assist him in that work he set him about for the good of his People, *Isa. 45. 1, 2.*

Isa. 10. 5, 6.

Isa. 45. 1, 2.

Sometimes, Offenders are spared in respect of the Birth that they travel with; so a Woman with child (that is condemned) is Reprieved till she be delivered; (for however she be wicked, yet the Child in her womb may prove a profitable member to the Common-wealth). So many a wicked man is with child  
with

Acts 4. 27.  
28.

with some sin, and in *travel with mischief*, and the Lord spares him, till he be delivered of it. *Herod, Pontius Pilate, and Judas* were in travel till they had put Christ to Death, and God spares them till they had brought forth, *Acts 4. 27, 28.* And then the Law is executed on them.

Gen. 18. 32  
Exod. 32.  
24.  
Act. 27. 24.

Sometimes an Offender is spared upon the Petition and desire of some other made on their behalf; so God spared the wicked for some good mens sake who lived amongst them, (as, *Gen. 18. 32.* and *Exod. 32. 14.* *Acts 27. 24.*) So here in my Text, the Figg-Tree is spared upon the Intercession of the Dresser.

2 King. 19.  
37.

Sometimes an Offender is put off from the Session to the Assizes; God Almighty suspendeth and deferreth the just, and deserved punishment of the wicked, to inflict it upon them in time, and place, more convenient for his Glory, their confusion, and the example of others: Thus the blasphemous miscreant, *Sennacherib* was not destroyed in the night when his Army was, he is suffered to return to the place from whence he came, and there he shall be slain in the Temple of their false god *Nisroch*, by the Sword of his two Sons, *Adramelech* and *Sharezer*, whom God used as his Instruments, to make his punishment the more notorious, for his Idolatry and blasphemy, *2 King. 19. 37.* And some men are put off to the great Assizes, *1 Tim. 5. 24.* *Some mens sins are open before hand, going before to Judgment, and some men's they follow after.*

1 Tim. 5. 24

1 King. 21.  
29.

And sometimes an Offender may be Reprived upon his Repentance, hoping that he will become a new man, and serviceable to Church or State: So God spareth a wicked man upon his Repentance and Humiliation, as he did *Ahab*, *1 King. 21. 29.* but (more especially) he spared his own Elea, that they may have time actually to repent, and be brought into the State of grace. Thus you see that there are many reasons of God's patient forbearance, so that it doth no way impeach his Truth and Justice: Therefore take heed, lest any of you charge God foolishly, whom you ought to magnifie, for his rich patience, and great mercy in sparing.

Rom. 2. 4.

As these sin against God's Justice (in respect of his Patience), so others highly offend against the richness of his goodness, *Rom. 2. 4.* *Despise thou the riches of his goodness?* Many such unthank-

ful



ful and dissolute sinners there are in the World ; so far are they from prizing of this mercy of God, in bearing with them, that they despise it, making the patience of God but as a fair day to ramble in, after lascivious vanities; and grow more wanton by God's forbearance. The more patient God is towards them, the more bold they are to offend Him ; so we read, Eccles. 8. 11. *Because Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil,* or (as some read it) *their heart is full to do evil*; full of evil purposes, full of evil imaginations, full of devices, for the producing of evil works ; Their hearts are so full, that there is no room for the fear of God's wrath, no room for the consideration of their own danger, their sinful and naughty hearts turns God's infinite clemency, to an encrease of wickedness.

Eccles. 8.  
11.

Should a Malefactor, after Sentence given, be Reprieved through the Clemency of his Judge, and suffered to go abroad, and upon his good carriage and behaviour, have his Pardon promised from his Prince ; fall to his former outrages of Robbing, and the like, is it not just that he should be caught again, and executed without mercy ? Such is thy Case, who thus abusest the patience of thy God. Wherefore,

Be perswaded to make the right use of the patience and long-sufferance of the Lord, as the Apostle directs, *Rom. 2. 4.* and let it lead thee (as it were by the hand) to true Repentance : Remembering,

Use 3.  
Rom. 2. 4.

First, How long God hath trusted thee with his Patience, and given thee time to make thy Peace, and sue out thy Pardon. Should a Traytor that is condemned (as thou art) have a Reprieve granted him, for half so many years as thou hast lived (albeit he had no promise granted of a final pardon) upon his good carriage and behaviour ; how thankful would he be, and how happy would he think himself in that ? Thou hast a promise, that upon thy Repentance and turning unto God, thou shalt be pardoned and forgiven. The means are prescribed, the way shewed how to obtain it ; and if thou beest not wanting to thy self, God will not be wanting to thee. *Would the Lord have shewed all these things unto us,* (said the wife of Manoah if he were pleased to kill us), *Judg. 13. 23.* So say to thy sinful Soul,

Judg. 13.  
23.

Soul, God hath spared thee thus long, exercised great Patience towards thee; called upon thee, both by his Word and Rod, to repent and turn: Would He have done all this, if He willed not thy Salvation, but resolved thy destruction and perdition?

Secondly, Forget not how many have suffered for those sins that thou art guilty of, long since; who had not that Patience shewed unto them that thou hast had, but were taken away, and carried to Execution, upon the very act of their sinning. (as *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, who were smitten in the act of their Lust; *Ananias* and *Saphira* in the very act of lying, &c.) and that, for any thing we can say to the contrary, the first time that they acted that wickedness; when thou hast committed the same sin, and that often, and with as high an hand as ever they did; yet thou livest this day to hear thy self called upon, to amend thy sinful life. *Behold severity, (yet Justice) unto them; but patience and long suffering unto thee*, Rom. 11. 22. Let that lead thee to Repentance.

Rom; 11.  
22.

Thirdly, In not making the right use of God's patience, and profiting by it, thou despisest it; and in despising it, thou despisest Goodness: A nature of such beauty and sweetness, that every one is in love with it; and, in despising that, thou shewest thy self to be evil in a very high degree, and so much the more evil, by how much he is the more good unto thee: Hear what the Scripture speaks of God's patience and forbearance, Rom. 2. 4. *Despisest thou the riches of his forbearance and long suffering?* Where observe, First, This *Ἀνοχή* this Patience, an forbearance in bearing with sinners, is *ἡμετέρας* Goodness; A stream issuing from that native Goodness which is in God; or rather from him, who is Goodness it self.

Consider then, in the second place; the Degree of this goodness of God; It is not common but extraordinary Goodness, not penurious but bountifull, the Riches of his Goodness; Riches in respect of the abundance of them, the stock and store that you spend upon; and in regard of the usefulness it is riches; which is the gaining of Souls, which is the Riches that God desireth, and laboureth for. *Hear this you Despisers, and wonder; nay, hear it, and be confounded, all ye that despise these Riches of God's Patience.*

AR. 13. 41.

Lastly,



Lastly, In not making this use of God's Patience, thou dost but farther *harden thy heart* in Impenitency, and *treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath*, Rom. 2. 5. that is, thou bringest a heavier weight of wrath upon thine own Soul: Look, as men of this World are daily adding to their Treasure, so do such as despite God's Patience, daily add to their Treasure, Wrath and Vengeance, which shall be revealed in the day of God's wrath, and *just revelation of the righteous Judgment of God*.

Rom. 2. 5.

If, notwithstanding all that hath been said, thou wilt go on in a sinfull course, and still sin against the Riches of God's Patience, thou mayst conclude that thou hast a hard heart (as the Apostle doth of those), for if there be any ingenuity, any remorse, in thee, these serious thoughts cannot but work upon thee, and be an effectuall means to bring thee to Repentance; and that, to Salvation. Cruell *Saul*, plotting and practising *David's* death, when he perceived what an advantage *David* had him at, and how (more then once) he had both power and opportunity to have slain him and taken his life from him, (but did not do it, albeit he was instigated unto it by *Abishai*,) was so overcome with this kindnesse, that he with tears breaks forth into this passionate speech, *Oh my Son David! I will no more do thee harm because my Soul was precious in thine eyes this day*, 1 Sam. 26. 21. But God's patience and loving kindnesse towards thee, hath exceeded all that ever *David* did, or could do, towards *Saul*; He hath often had thee at an advantage (and so still hath,) his Justice eggs him on to smite thee, at home, abroad, sleeping, waking, &c. and yet he spares thee: Now, if *Saul* (a Reprobate) was so overcome with *David's* kindnesse, as that he promised to do *David* no more harm; much more should this great patience in God towards thee, (notwithstanding thy daily provocations,) cause thee to relent, and so work upon thee, as to humble thy Soul before God, and bring thee upon thy knees, and cause thee to say with a broken heart, *Oh my God! I see that the Salvation of my Soul is precious unto thee; I will no more dishonour thee; I will no more sin against thee, as I have done: Do this, and do it quickly; for know, that albeit Mercy hath bayled thee from the hand of Justice, yet withall, it hath undertaken, that if thou neglectest to sue out thy pardon, within a time prescribed,*

1 Sam. 24.

1 Sam. 26.

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it will deliver thee again into the hand of Justice. Thou canst not expect alwayes to be born withall; It was but for a year that this Desser desired the Owner's Patience, in the behalf of this barren Figg-Tree, and that will soon come about. And of that, (*the Time* desired, on the behalf of the Figg-Tree, whereby this Request is *amplified*) we are now to speak.

*Text.*

*This year also]*

As if he should have said; Thou hast been pleased Lord, of thine own Goodnesse, to bear a long time with this Barren-Tree, three years already; I know, that thou canst not alwaies bear, yet upon my humble suit, spare it one year more; It is no long time I crave, in the behalf of it; It is but *one year*, which will soon come about, and have an end: respite it that time; It may be, upon better husbanding of it, it will bear fruit, &c. That we may collect from hence, is this,

*Dott.*

*God's Patience hath a Period; It hath its bounds and limits beyond which it will not passe.*

*Amos 8. 2.*

For Proof, read *Amos 8. 2. The end is come, I will not passe by them any more*; that is, I will have no more Patience towards them; So *Jer. 1. 11, 12. I will hasten my word to perform it*, that is, to make good the Judgments that I have denounced: And that Text should still be sounding in our Ears, *Ezek. 7. 5, — 16. An end is come, an end is come; Behold it watcheth for thee, Behold, it is come, it is come.*

*Jer. 1. 11,  
12.*

*Ezek. 7.  
5, — 16.*

Shall I shew you this in some Examples? We begin with the old World; A long time God did bear with the wickednesse of it, but it had a Period; an hundred and twenty years were set it for Repentance, beyond which time it should not be spared, *Gen. 6. 3. Four hundred years shall the Amorites, and other wicked Nations, be spared, till the measure of their sins was filled up, but those years being expired, longer they should not be born withall, Gen. 15. 16. And there is a day of recompence, and a year of vengeance for the controversies of Zion, Isa. 34. 8. that is, the set time, wherein God will give a full satisfaction, and retribution of the wrongs, that have been done to his Church, in the destruction of their enemies: Nor is the year only, but the day of Vengeance set. What God saith of Blessings, the like may be said of Curses, from the 24th day of the 9th Month; So from such*

*Gen. 6. 3.*

*Gen. 15.  
16.  
Isa. 34. 8.*

*Hag. 2. 22.*



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a day of such a Month I will not spare you; yea, to lesse than a day, to a *Morning* is the bounds set, *Hos. 10. 15.* and there is an appointed time, the year, the month, the day, wherein he will judge the *whole World in righteousness*, *A& 17. 31.*

Should God alwaies bear with Sinners, he should suffer in all his Attributes; his Justice would be wronged, and blemished, which by no means will endure, that the wicked should be held as Innocent, *Exod. 34. 7. Jer. 44. 2. —*

He is a *Jealous God*, *Exod. 20. 5. Deut. 4. 26.* Now, should God perpetually bear with sinners, it would be a disgrace unto him, His Jealousy will not endure, that sin should ever go unpunished, *Psal. 50. 21. Mal. 3. 15.*

He is a *most wise God*; God *only wise* *1 Tim. 1. 17.* Albeit he bears, and spares, and shews mercy to sinners, it is ever moderated with Wisdom; He forbears as long as there is Hope, *Jer. 51. 9.* but when men become incurable, his *Wisdom* will not suffer him to bear any longer, *Isa. 1. 5.*

He is a *Good God*; and being good, he must needs *love goodness*, and *hate Iniquity*, *Psal. 45. 7.* Now, God should not be good, if he should be ever Good to those that will never be Good: His *Goodness* will not suffer him ever to spare those that hate and despise Goodness; So we might shew of his other Attributes.

Secondly, All the Liberty that God hath given to man, is finite; yea, life it self, *Job. 7. 1. Is there not an appointed time for man upon Earth, and are not his daies the daies of an Hireling?* As his Daies, so his Sins (like vife) are limited and bounded; They have their measure to fill up, beyond which they shall not pass, *Mat. 23. 32. 1 Thes. 2. 16.*

You may see by this, how vaine the hopes are of such as think alwaies to escape, because they have been, and are, a long time spared: Forbearance of Punishment is no Argument of Impunity; God's Judgments are sure though they be late, & though he bear long, yet he will not alwaies forbear. Sometimes his Patience allowes Iniquity a shorter breathing, sometimes a longer; yet, be it longer or shorter, the *end will come*, he will spare no more. Nor doth God allow so long a time to sinners under the *Gospel*, as he did under the *Law*: The Fruit that enjoys the

*Hos. 10. 15*

*A& 17. 31.*

*Reas.*

*Exod. 34.*

*7.*

*Jer. 44. 2. —*

*Exod. 20. 5*

*Deut. 4. 26*

*Psal. 50. 21*

*Mal. 3. 15.*

*1 Tim. 1.*

*17.*

*Jer. 51. 9.*

*Isa. 1. 5.*

*Psal. 45. 7.*

*Job 7. 1.*

*Mat. 23. 32*

*11se 1.*

Amos 8. 2.

Tit. 2. 11.

Dr. Plesson

Text.

warm beams of the Sun, and hath the reflection of them, from the Wall whereto the Tree is fastned, is sooner ripened than that which growes in the shade; so is Verrue and Vice, now under the warm Sun-shine of the Gospel; and when thy Fru it is come to its ripenesse, it shall be plucked for the Market, *Amos 8. 2.* God will not suffer it to thead and drop down without plucking. You do not read, that the sins of *Israel* and *Judah* (for which they were at any time plagued with Captivity) were so long in ripening as the Sins of the *Canaanites*, upon whom there did no light shine. And now, that the *Grace of God* hath appeared, (as we read *Tit. 2. 11.*) the Lord is farr more quick and peremptory, in rejecting and casting off a wicked People, than he was formerly (saith a Reverend Divine); He will not wait so long as he was wont: but, be it longer or shorter, there will be an end of his waiting, and he will wait no more upon thee, and the end is near; and then the Sentence of Mercy failing, the Sentence of Judgment shall take place. Therefore be perswaded to make good use of the present time, you not knowing how short the time may be, before the end cometh: You would think that Malefactor desperate, that would swear, and twagger, and revell it, at the foot of the Gallows, because there are some few Rounds of a Ladder betwixt his Neck and the Rope: So desperate art thou, that wilt go on in a sinfull course, knowing the end will come, but because the end is not yet come, thou runnest on in a sinfull course, to the encreasing of thy future condemnation: And so much of the *Circumstance of Time*. Now for the *End* or *Aime* of the Dresser in making this Request, in generall,

*Till I shall digg about it, and dung it,]*

Had the D esser of the Vineyard aimed at himself, or his own ease, he would not have made this Request, in the behalf of the Figg-Tree; he might have thought, that if in case it were cut down, or stubbed up, his pains would be the lesse; that care of digging, and dunging it, had been over, and that then he might take his ease: But it was the good of it that he desired, more than his own gain; so that it might stand one year longer, he would renew his pains, and double his diligence about it, in hope of future fruitfulness. Thence observe (in general),

Faith-



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*Faithfull Ministers seek not themselves, but the good of those committed to their charge.* They have no self-respects in the discharge of their Dutyes; they aime more at the good of those they have the charge of, than at their own ease and profit.

What an opportunity had *Moses* to desert and leave the People which God committed to his charge; *Let me alone* (saith God) *that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great Nation,* *Exod. 32. 10.* but he would not be hired, nor byassed; no, not by God himself, to give up that People, and forsake them; (albeit they were very stubborn, and rebellious, and ungrateful, to God and him,) but desires God to pardon them, and either blot the Peoples sins out of his Book, or his name out of it, *ver. 32.*

*St. Paul* was such another; he sought more his People's good than his own profit or Salvation: *I seek not yours but you,* (saith he *2 Cor. 12. 14*) not your Gold, but your Souls; and *I will verily gladly spend and be spent for you,* *ver. 15.* I will spend the Talent which God hath betruited me withal, and be spent in the spending of it, that I may further your Salvation; So again *1 Cor. 10. 33.* *I please all men,* that is, by applying himself to the good of all in all things, that is, such as are lawfull and indifferent; and so was content to make himself a *Servant to all though free,* (as he had said before,) *that he might gain some, and save the more,* *1 Cor. 9. 19, 20, 27.* Nor did he aim at his own profit in so doing, but theirs, *even the profit of many that they might be saved:* So careful was he, that he seems to preferre their good before his own life, *1 Thes. 2. 8.* yea, *Soul's Salvation,* *Rom. 9. 3.*

To the like practise he exhorted others, *1 Cor. 11. 1.* *Be ye therefore followers of me, as I am of Christ.* He followed the example of his Lord and Master, in that he did; for *he sought not his own Glory,* *Joh. 8. 50.* Nor did he please himself (with the Apostle, *Rom. 15. 3.*); that is, he sought not his own ease and content, and satisfaction of the inclination of Nature (which abhorreth pain, and the destruction of itself); but took such a course, which demonstrated, that he sought our good more than his own.

Doct.

*Exod. 32. 10.*

*Verf. 32.*

*2 Cor. 12.*

*14, 15.*

*Animas pro opibus, salu-tem pro auro quaerebat Apostolus: Sacerius in loc.*

*Hinc discant universi Pastores quid Ecclesiis suis debeant.*

*Calv.*

*1 Cor. 10.*

*33.*

*1 Cor. 9.*

*19, 20, 27.*

*1 Thes. 2. 8*

*Rom. 9. 3.*

*1 Cor. 11. 1*

*Joh. 8. 50.*

*Rom. 15. 3*

You

Use 1.

Phil. 2. 4,  
21.Rom. 16.  
17.2 Pet. 2. 3.  
Phil. 3. 18,  
19.Mich. 2. 3,  
5, 12.  
Ezek. 13.  
18, 19.  
Tit. 1. 11.

Use 2.

2 Cor. 12.  
18, 16, 15.

You may from hence learn, to put a difference betwixt the faithful Minister, and the Hireling; The unsound Minister is not of this Make. The faithful Minister seeks *not his own, but the things of Jesus Christ*, and endeavours not to promote his own but his Master's Glory. They preach not their own parts, passions, nor design; seek not preferment, wealth, ease. This conscience (said *Melancthon*) I carry about me, whithersoever I go: But do the Unfaithful so? nay, hear what the Apostle *St. Paul* speaketh, *Rom. 16. 17* *They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Bellies.* And *St. Peter* tells us of some, who, *through covetousnesse, with feigned words, make merchandise of their people,* 2 Pet. 2. 3. The Merchants were false Teachers, such as he speaks of to the *Philippians*, cap. 3. 18, 19. But these come to sell what He bought at so dear a Rate; and so to crosse his proceedings. *They sell you;* and that might be done, either by *Silence*, in not giving warning when danger is near, and ringing the Alarm Bell at the Approach of the Enemy, (so the City may be betrayed;) or by *Schismaticall* and unsound Doctrine, which poysons the Soul: Or else by flattering and *feigned words* (as the Apostle there speaks) crying *Peace, Peace*, all shall be well; And so they sell you into the hands of *Sathan*. And the ground of all this is, *their Covetousnesse*; A Sin that is hateful in all men, but most odious in such men, and sharply reprov'd *Mich. 2. 3, 5, 12. Ezek. 13. 18, 19. Tit. 1. 11.* Such as these are, all unsound and unfaithfull Ministers. But it is otherwise with such as are Faithful; Merchants they are, and *Wise Merchants* too, and they desire not to sell you from Christ, but to buy you, and that for Christ; not with *feigned words*, but with their labours, vigilancies, painfulness, prayers; This is the price they willingly pay for you; and such a *Covetousnesse* they have after your good, and Soul's Salvation.

But it is a difficult task to perswade the World of this; What can God's Ministers say, or do, but it shall be misconstrued, as if they sought themselves therein, and had some by-ends of their own? *St. Paul* himself could not escape that censure, as appears by that which he speaks 2 Cor. 12. 15, 16, 17. And therefore he calls *God to witnesse* the truth of that which he said, for their better assurance, which, had it not been needful, (questionlesse) he would



would not have done, *ver. 19.* Much lesse can God's Minitters in these daies. If we command, exhort, rebuke, as we are commanded, *2 Tim. 4. 2. Tit. 2. 15.* then we seek to *lord it over God's Heritage*, and take too much upon us, and would bring all in subjection under us: If we tell you of that Honour which is due to Ministers, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* both of Countenance and Maintenance; then, It is in our cause that we speak, and Who will believe us? If they urge that Text *1 Cor. 9. 7. &c.* then they are covetous, and seek *yours* and not *you*: If they call for their own, and that in the most peaceable manner that they can, and for this end, that they may be able to follow their studies, and provide for your Souls; then they are contentious and covetous (when yet it is no Covetousnesse in you, to ask for six pence that is owing; nor Covetousnesse in any, be his Calling never so mean, (Tapster, Tinker, or Cobler,) to live of his labour). And shal the Minister be worldly, covetous, or troublesome, in desiring to live upon his Calling? Something we have said before of this, (and such Coleworts twice sodd will not be easily digested:) We passe now from the Generall to the Particular Terms, on which he desires this Favour,

*I shall digg about it and dung it,]*

By *digging* and *dunging*, some understand the Use of the *Keys* of the Church; *Doctrine* and *Discipline*; both *Manna* and *Virga* must be in the *Ark*: If either of these be wanting in the Church, one of the Principal Pillars will be wanting that should support it; An Interpretation that needs not be rejected.

Others, by *digging*, understand the preaching of the *Law*, and by *dunging*, the *Gospel*. By the *Law*, the Roots of the Tree are laid bare and open, the curst estate and condition of a Sinner is discovered and made known; and by the *glad tydings* of the *Gospel* we are *dunged* and manured, our Roots are cherished, and the Tree becomes more fruitfull; which Interpretation is preferred: For (as I conceive) the meaning of the Dresser, is, that he would take more pains in the husbanding of that Tree than formerly, & leave nothing undone that belonged to his Calling, neither in the *Legall* nor *Evangelicall* part of his Office: In case there had been any neglect in him, which hindred the fruitfulness of that Figg-Tree, he would now amend that fault, renew

D d d

his

*Ver. 19.*

*2 Tim. 4. 2.  
Tit. 2. 15.*

*1 Tim. 5.  
17.*

*1 Cor. 9. 7.*

*Text.*

his pains, and do any thing within his power, that might further the fructifying thereof: And upon these terms, on his part, to be performed, he makes that Request, that the Figg-Tree might be prepared.

From this, (that the Dresser of the Vineyard promiseth to digg and dung about the Figg-Tree,) it may easily be gathered; that

Dott.

*Good Ministers are great Pains-takers.*

Their Calling is no Calling of Ease and Idleness; It is no easy Profession, nor idle Man's Occupation. to be a Minister.

Rev. 4. 6.

There are four Beasts mentioned *Revel. 4. 6.* which stood about the Throne; the first was like a *Lion*, the second like an *Oxe* or *Calf*, the third had a *Face like a Man*, and the fourth Beast was like a *flying Eagle*. These four Creatures are interpreted by the Ancients, to be, First, and principally, the four Evangelists; and consequently, or by a just and faire accommodation, enlarged to all the Ministers of the Gospel: *Quatuor Animalia, sunt Ecclesia Doctores* (saith *Ambrose*). All the Qualities of these Creatures must concur to the Qualification of a faithfull Minister; He must have the *Courage* of the *Lion*, *In Leone, vis indamabilis*; such a courage must be in him, that neither fears nor hopes should shake his constancy: *In Bove, vis salutaris*; He is to be an *Oxe* for labour, he may not be so overgrown or stall-fed, as that he becomes thereby lazy; he must labour at the Plough, and plough the right furrow; preaching for the saving of Souls, and not for the sharpening of Wits: *In Aquila, vis speculatrix*, He must have, like the *Eagle*, both an open Eye, not winking at the sins of his People, and a piercing Eye, being able to look on the Sun; to the constant truth of God revealed in the Scriptures: *In Homine, vis rationatrix*; A gentle and *persuasive disposition* must be in him, *2 Cor. 5. 20.* Such a holy gentleness and appliableness is to be in a Minister; Such Qualifications and Endowments must be in him, which shew that his Calling is no idle Calling.

2 Cor. 5. 20

Ezek. 3. 17

1 Cor. 3. 9.

Joh. 10. 2.

2 Tim. 2. 6.

Those many Resemblances, that the Spirit of God useth in Scripture, to set forth their Office and Calling, testifyeth no less. They are termed *Watchmen*, *Ezek. 3. 17.* *Labourers*, *1 Cor. 3. 9.* *Shepherds*, *John 10. 2.* *Husbandmen*, *2 Tim. 2. 6.* *Harvest men*,  
Mat.



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Mat. 9. 38. *Souldiers*, 2 Tim. 2. 5. *Fishermen*, Mat. 4. 19. *Builders*, 1 Cor. 3. 11. (and other such like.) Now, none of these are Callings of Ease and Idleness, but of great Labour and Toyle; the Minister's is no lesse laborious, nay, it exceeds: In which respect, St. Paul questions, *Ad hoc Quis idoneus? Who is sufficient for these things*, 2 Cor. 2. 16.

Mat. 9. 38.  
2 Tim. 2. 5.  
Mat. 4. 19.  
1 Cor. 3. 11

2 Cor. 2. 16

Let us call our eyes a little upon the pains of the Dresser, mentioned in my Text; and it will appear that it is no idle man's Occupation, nor easy Vocation, whatever the World thinks.

First, He is a Digger, and so no Loyterer; there is labour and pains in that: And is there no labour (think you) in the work of the Ministry? St. Paul speaks of his *labours abundant*, not so much in travelling from place to place, as in teaching the People; So Gal. 4. 11. *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you my Labour in vain*: So 1 Tim. 3. 1. *If any desire the Office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work*. A work it is then without all question, and no sport nor play; And 1 Tim. 5. 17. *The Elders which rule well are worthy of double honour, especially those, Qui laborant Verbo & Doctrinâ, which labour in Word and Doctrine*.

2 Cor. 11.  
23.

Gal. 4. 11.  
1 Tim. 3. 1.

1 Tim. 5.  
17.

Secondly, From the Text, we may gather what kind of Labour the Minister's labour is; you shall find it to be no leight nor easy labour; For

It is *Labor renovatus, A renewed Labour*. This Dresser had digged about this Figg-Tree, and dunged it, before now (without all question); but that is not enough, he must over with his work again; Such is the Labour of the Minister. In which respect, his Toyle and Travell is parallel'd with the Husbandman's, who hath no vacation: He is alwayes doing; either plowing, or sowing, or harrowing, or weeding, or reaping; Every Season of the Year brings with it a severall Task: And when he hath gone his Round, and may be thought to have finished his work, he is then to begin again, and fall afresh to his plowing, &c. And so from year to year he renews his Labour.

*Redit Agri-  
colis labor  
actus in or-  
bem.*

And in some case it is worse than the Husbandman's, and more toylsome; For the Plowman, as he leaves his Ridge, so

Chryl. ad  
pop. Anti-  
och. Hom.  
13.

he is like to find it at his Return; where he pitched his Plough, upon the same Furrow he shall have it the next day: But we seldom find our work, upon our return, in so good a forwardness as we left it. Hear St. Chrysostome to this Poynt, *Non sicut reliqua Artes, ita est Docendi vis*, &c. The Art of Teaching is not like other Arts; for the Goldsmith, what work soever he be frameth, and casteth in a mold, and layeth aside; the next day when he returneth to his work, he shall find it as he left it: So, the Black-Smith, and the Mason, and every other Artificer whatsoever, all shall find their work in the same state as it was, when it was put out of hand: But it is not so with us, for after we have taken great pains to reform you, to wean you from the World, and to make you more zealous of good works; you are scarce out of sight, but the Evill One comes, and with the multitude of businesse and cares of this World, or the wanton delights and pleasures of the flesh, he choaketh that good Seed which we have sown in you, and maketh the Word which you have heard to become altogether unprofitable; so perverting and corrupting you, as that our work is more difficult to us, then, than it was before. And elsewhere he bewaileth this unto his Hearers; The Letters (saith he) that I inscribe every Lord's day, you suffer to be blotted out again: And what excuse will you have that you are not fruitful?

Hom. 11. in  
Mat.

Phil. 3. 1.  
2 Pet. 3. 1.  
2 Cor. 13. 1.  
1 Sam. 26.  
8.

2 Sam. 20.  
10.  
Joan. 6.  
2 King. 13.

Over then we must with our work, again and again. A second, yea, a third time we must come unto you, and stir you up by way of remembrance; Sin is not so easily killed, that we should say of it, as Abisshai said of Saul, *Let me smite it but this once unto the Earth, I will not smite it a second time.* This Hagar will endure many blowes before she be turned out of doors; Nor are we so cunning as Joab was, in hitting Amasa under the fifth ribb, so that we need to strike no more. We must compasse the Walls of Jericho many daies together; and smite the Earth with the same Arrowes, five or six times, before that Syrian Sin, will be consumed and destroyed.

Again, The Work of this Dresser was *Labor Duplicatus*, a duplicated, or double, Labour: Here is both digging and dunging of the Figg-Tree; One without the other was not sufficient.



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sufficient. Christ's threefold *Pasce*, enjoyned *Peter* (as some conceive) to a three-fold Duty; feed by *Doctrine*, feed by *Life* and *Example*, feed by *Writing*. It is hard to say, that such was Christ's meaning, but it is credible enough that the triple *Pasce*, given him in charge, enjoynes at least a double diligence, *Pray* and *Preach*, or rather *Preach* and *Catechise*: for Sheep and Lambs, must be fed. *I magnifie mine Office*, (saith the Apostle) *as, if by any means I might save some*, no pains must be spared, no means neglected; more wayes then one must be used to gain Souls to God; In so doing, *we magnifie our Office* as we ought to do.

Both these considered, it must needs follow in the third place, that this Dresser's Labour, was, *Labor cum sudore*, a soar sweating Labour: Who sweats more then they, who Digg and Delve, and Till the Earth? God imposeth it on *Adam*, and all his sons, that they should eat their bread in the *sweat of their browes*; And surely, if Ministers eat not their bread with the sweat of their *brow*, yet they eat their bread with the *sweat* of their *brain*. Ye remember (saith the Apostle) *our labour and travel*, 1 *Thes. 2.9.* or our labour and sweat (as some read), Two soar words are joyned together; Nor doth the *sweat of the Brain* come short of the *sweat of the Brow*.

This may serve to confute the folly of such, as are of opinion that Ministers live the easiest lives of any, and that they eat the sweat of other mens browes, who labour and take pains for them, whilst they themselves lye idly, &c.

As many in the World use that Calling, it may (indeed) be thought to be a Calling of excessive idlenesse: But if we consider the Calling in its own nature, and as it ought to be performed and discharged, it will appear to be no Calling of laziness, but of greatest pains and labour. *Melancthon* was wont to say, that the three sorest labours of all, were the labours of the Magistrate, Minister, and Woman in travail. *Sudor Oeconomicus est magnus, Politicus major, Ecclesiasticus maximus*, saith *Luther*. The care and burthen of the Governour of the Family is much; of a Magistrate, more; but of a Minister, most of all. All Government is burthensome, *ramonus, quam bonos*. All Government is layd upon their shoulders, they must help to bear the

John 21.  
15, 16.  
Pasc.

Verbo.  
Exemplo  
Scripto.

Rom. 11.  
13, 14.

Gen. 3 9.

1 Thes. 2.  
— 9.  
Τὸν κόπον  
καὶ τὸν  
μοχθόν.  
Use 1.

Docentis.  
Imperantis.  
Paturientis.

1 Chron.  
15.2.

Acts &  
Mon. Fol.  
1578.

Prov. 18.  
14.  
Luke 22,  
44.

Joh. 5. 57.

Use 2.

the Church (as the Levit under the Law did help to bear the Ark, 1 Chron. 15, 2.) And that is load sufficient to make the back of an Angel stoop. Father *Laymer* when he had layd down his Bishoprick; skippt, and leaped, for that (as he said) he was discharged of such a heavy load.

The Calling of a Minister indeed, is *Spiritual*, but no whit the lesse laborious in that respect. The sufferings of the Soul exceed the sufferings of the Body, (as appears by that which *Selomon* speaks, Prov. 18. 14. and by what we read of our Saviour's sufferings, Luke 22. 44.) So doth the labour of the Soul, exceed all other bodily labour whatsoever, which (although it be great yet it) maintaines strength, preserves the Stomach, encreaseth appetite, and adds vigour to every part; But it is otherwise in the labours of the mind, they weaken the natural Powers, waste vital Spirit, decay the health of Body, and shorten Life.

We read, *John* 8. 57. that the Jews told Christ, he was not yet 50 years of Age; true, he wanted almost 20 years of it, (being not much above 30), and yet (as it seems) by their speech they judged him to be much Elder: The care and pains that he took to save Souls (think some) brought on him that shew of old Age: Sure enough it is, that the care and pains of this Calling hastens Old Age on them, who, by natural temper, are framed to greatest vigour, and fitted to extend Life to the utmost term of nature: And thence it is, that (usually) such Ministers as are painful in their Callings, are weak in Body; feeble in strength; sparing in Dyer; and more subject to Diseases then men of other Callings and Professions; So that (as *Synesius* sometimes complained) they may truly say, they carry nothing away with them; but, *bonam Conscientiam & malam Valitudinem*; A good Conscience, and a weak and crazed Body.

And as this may Confute some, so it may Inform others; First, of the right which a Minister hath to receive maintenance from his People, amongst whom he labours; Secondly, of the wrong that is offered to the Minister, in withholding from him that wages which is due unto him for his Labours. Of both, something shall be said, with all convenient brevity.

That there is a maintenance due to them, who labour in the Word and Doctrine; I think no rational man that doth acknowledge



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ledge their Calling, can deny; *The Workman* (saith Christ) *is worthy of his meat*, Math. 10. 10. and the *Labourer of his hire*, Luke 10. 7. And this is but *equity*; and this equity is illustrated by St. *Paul* with many *Similitudes*, and multiplicity of Arguments, 1 Cor. 9. 7. *Who goeth a Warfare at any time at his own Charges? Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not the Fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a Flock, and eateth not of the Milk of the Flock?* Now, God's Ministers are the *Captaines* of his Army. The *Husbandmen* of his Vineyard; The *Shepherds* of his Flock: So then, as *Souldiers* have deservedly, their due stipends; *Husbandmen* reap their answerable Fruits; And *Shepherds* receive their Pastoral profits; So must God's Ministers have a recompence for their Labours, answerable or agreeable to the work that is in their hands.

It may be, some may object against these similitudes, taken from worldly things; because of the difference of humane matters, from divine. This objection the Apostle prevents, and confirmeth the dictate of natural Reason, with the determination of the Law of God, verse 8. 9. *Say I these things as a Man, or saith not the Law this same thing also? For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn.* The Argument is drawn from the lesser to the greater; *The mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn, is not to be muzzled*; therefore, (by greater consequence) *the Servants of God, His Ministers*, (the Oxen of his Spiritual Husbandry, who labour in the Field of his Church) *must not be muzzled from enjoying just maintenance in their painful places*; That this was God's principal aime and drift in giving that Law, he there shews; and so else where, 1 Tim. 5. 17, 18.

Again, The Apostle evinceth this his Assertion, by an Argument taken from the greater to the lesse, verse 11. *If we have sown to you Spiritual things, is it a great thing, if we shall reap your carnal things?* as if he should say, The Minister layeth out Spiritual things to his People, and provides for their Souls, wherefore things temporal are a tribute unto them, and may not be withheld from them: Such is the Apostle's reasoning, Rom. 15. 27. If the Gentiles have bin made partakers of their Spiritual things, their Duty is also to Minister unto them carnal things.

Math. 10.  
10.  
Luk. 10. 7.

1 Cor. 9. 7.

Verse 8. 9.

Deut. 25. 4.

1 Tim. 5.  
17, 18.

1 Cor. 9.  
V. 11.

Rom. 15.  
37.

Lastly,

1 Cor. 9.  
13, 14.

Lastly, The Apostle fortifieth the Truth of what he had delivered, concerning the maintenance of the Minister with an Argument drawn from God's Ordinance, verse 13. 14. *Do you not know that they which Minister about holy things, live of the things of the Temple, &c. Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which Preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.* The comparison lyes betwixt the Ministers of both Testaments; The Levites and Priests, merly in lieu of their Labours in their Callings, were well and plentifully provided for, by God's Ordinance; wherefore it is an uncontrolled consequence, that the Ministers of the new Testament (which is of the Spirit, and not of the Letter) should have liberal allowance for their Labours.

Here steps in the Quaker, and others of the Anabaptistical crew, to interrupt us, crying out of such Ministers as expect recompence for their Labours, that they are Baal's Priests, Balaamitish Prophets, Preaching for gain, imagining (as it seems) that God who hath promised to reward his Servants in Heaven, is not willing to allow unto them any repast in the way to Heaven, to support frail nature.

Object.  
Mat. 10. 8.  
Resp.

But *freely you have received, freely give*, is the command of Christ *Math. 10. 8.*

That is to be limited to miraculous cures, as appears evidently by the Circumstances.

Verf. 10.

Secondly, Should it be extended further, the affection onely is ordered, and a greedy appetite of gain prohibited: In the meantime a supply of necessities, in the place where they should Preach, is permitted upon that ground, *The Labourer is worthy of his hire*, verse 10.

Gal. 1. 16,  
17.

Thirdly, *Receiving freely and giving freely*, are joyned together by our Saviour; the former is made the cause of the latter? Therefore, they ought to give freely, because they had received freely; Now, they received freely two wayes; First, without their own desert; Secondly, without their own pains and labour, having their gifts by immediate Revelation, as appears, *Gal. 1. 16, 17.* We receive our abilities *without* our own desert, but not *without* our own labour and industry; being brought up by our Parents to Learning, with great cost and charge, &c. and in that sense we receive not freely; that talent which we have received,



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is in part by our pains, and therefore we may receive in part for our pains.

But St. Paul preached to the *Corinthians* and *Thessalonians*, without receiving wages, *1 Cor. 9. 15. 1 Thes. 2. 6, 7.* Nay, he laboured with his hands, that he might not be chargeable to the Church, *Acts 18. 3. 1 Thes. 2. 9. 2 Thes. 2. 8.*

Many things are lawful in themselves, which are not expedient: It was lawful for the Apostle in those times, to have taken maintenance of the Churches, where he Preached; he had Power to do it (as he saith, *1 Cor. 9. 6, 12. 2 Thes. 3. 9.*): but in regard of the Churches poverty, and appearance of Scandal, he forbore, *1 Cor. 9. 16, 18. 2 Cor. 11. 9, 12.* But it is not with the Church in these dayes, as it was with the Church then. Were exacting a due maintenance, a burthen indeed unto the Church, (in respect of the poverty thereof) Ministers should do well to yield of their Right, and supply their necessities by Art, Industry, or out of their own Possessions; but, we are feared in another *Canaan*, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, (where we are not onely sated, but in a manner surfeited with God's blessings), so that there is no fear of being burthensome to the Church, in that respect.

Secondly, Yet even in these times of the Churches poverty, he received wages and maintenance from other Churches, to do Service to them that stood in most need, *2 Cor. 11. 8. Phil. 4. 16.* But I shall forbear to spend any more in the confutation of these brain-sick Sectaries; who had more need of Physick to purge their brains, than Arguments to confute their follies.

There are others amongst us, who, albeit not possessed with an Anabaptistical Spirit, as the former, (for they grant that a competent maintenance is due to God's Ministers, in equity and justice for their Labours), yet they are not satisfied concerning the *Quantity* and *Quality* thereof: Or, of the Proportion and Law, whereby it should be raised. For the satisfaction of both, I shall speak somewhat. And first for the *Quantity*.

The Apostle speaks of *double honour* that is due unto him that labours in the Word and Doctrine, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* And, Who doubts, that the Apostle hath respect to the maintenance of the Minister therein? and that it ought to be liberal and suitable to that honourable Calling, that the Minister is called unto? A beggar-

Object.

*1 Cor. 9.*

*15.*

*1 Thes. 2.*

*6, 7.*

*Acts 18. 3.*

*1 Thes. 2.*

*2 Thes. 3. 8.*

Resp.

*1 Cor. 9. 6,*

*12.*

*2 Thes. 3. 9.*

*1 Cor. 9.*

*16, 18.*

*2 Cor. 11.*

*9, 12.*

*2 Cor. 11. 8*

*Phil. 4. 16.*

*1 Tim. 5.*

*17.*

1 Cor. 9. 7,  
13.

ly maintenance is no honour, but contempt to an Ambassador. *He that Preacheth the Gospel, should live of the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 7, 13. which cannot be understood, as if a bare sustentation, so much as may preserve from extream want, and keep Life and Soul tog ether, were sufficient; but, according to the Dignity and Convenience of the Ministerial Calling, he ought to Live, and be maintained both with Meat, Drink, Cloathing, and other Necessaries. As the Minister is *a Man*, so something is to be allowed him above meer necessity; something for delight: As he is *a Believer*, so his maintenance must extend to Wife, Children, Servants, for present, and some provision to be made for the future; else *he is worse then an Infidel*, 1 Tim. 5. 8. And then they must live as *Ministers*, and *men of God* ought to live, so as to be an *example* to others in *works of Charity*, and be *furnished to every good work* that belongs unto his Calling, 1 Tim. 3. 2. Now all this cannot be done by a niggardly and pinching maintenance. A competency must be allowed to do all this; But who shall Judge of this Competency, is the Question.

Dr. Herryss  
Sermon Hezekiah's  
Recovery.  
Pag. 39. &  
27.  
Judg 15.

Roberts  
Review  
of the Gos-  
pel. p. 132.

Shall Ministers be made Judges in that Case? Shall they designe a *Competency*, and so be their own carvers? that is not fitting, nor will that be granted: Who then shall do it? Shall the People? Now good Lord (saith a Reverend and Grave Divine), keep his Clergy from the Vulgars Competency; should this Competency be such, as every worldly and niggardly mind will Judge convenient, *Micha's wages ten shekels of Silver, a suit of apparel, and meat and drink would be esteemed sufficient for him*, (let his charge be what it will be). Shall the Civil Magistrate Judge thereof? and it wholly be left to his Discretion? But what if he be no Religious? Alas, how often are they defective, either in Uprightness, or in Wisdom, or specially in Religion? If ye look back to former times, and peruse Church-History, you shall not find it very usual to have Emperours, Princes, Potentates, and the great Men of this World, to be so sincerely Religious in performing the parts of *nursing Fathers*, as that the Ministers of the Gospel may expect such honourable maintenance as is due to their Calling from their hands: How then shall it be determined? Surely, the best determiner of this matter is the Scripture. That part which God at first commanded, and was of his



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his own Institution for the Minister's maintenance; and which *Customs* in all Ages hath commended for the maintenance of the Minister, is to be preferred to any other of humane Invention, and that is the *Truth* part of the Hearer's encrease, of their Fruits of the Earth; I mean of theirs, who are committed to his charge. This proportion hath bin thought fittest by Him, whose Wisdom could best Judge; and therefore should be submitted unto.

The other scruple that ariseth in the minds of men, concerns the *Raising of this maintenance*, How, and which way it may be most fittingly effected? That it must be raised out of the goods of All, and every one of the People that are instructed, is evident enough from that of the Apostle, Gal. 6.6. *Let him that is taught in the Word, make him that hath taught him partaker of all his goods.* But the manner of it, is questionable.

Gal. 6.6.

Some are altogether for Private Contributions, and Benevolencies, disclaiming all right that any Minister may have in the goods of any man, further than he himself shall be pleased to extend his charity unto him; nothing may be claimed, *ex debito iusticie*, all must be of good-will from the Hearer.

But St. Paul doth challenge it as a due and just reward, 1 Cor. 9.7. The *Labourer's wages* is not of *Devotion*, but of *Duty*. The Minister's maintenance is *wages for his work* (and so no Alms), and that which of *Duty* belongs unto them (and so not of *Courtesie*); Alms shew the *Liberality* and *Bounty* of the *Giver*, not any *worth* in the *Receiver*; They do alwayes exceed the desert of him that taketh the Alms; But it is not so here, for Temporal gifts hold no comparison with the travailes of the Minister, and that which he communicates unto his People, 1 Cor. 9.11. *Is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?* And the Apostle is bold to tell *Philemon* that he did owe even himself unto him, (*Philem. vers. 19.*) Base above measure, (saith one) and unbecoming Christians, is this conceit, That the Ministers maintaine is from Benevolence onely, and *ad placitum*, to be measured out by our Auditors; As if it had no foundation in *Justice*, but meerly in *Charity*. Those that would have Ministers to live on Alms, are no Friends to Learning nor Religion; but seek the overthrow of both. The Ministers mouth thereby is

1 Cor. 9.7.

1 Cor. 9.  
II.  
Phil. 19.  
Dr. Sclater  
Com. in  
2 Thes. 1.3.  
Vers. 9.  
*Quis enim  
virtutem  
amplectitur  
ipsam, Pro-  
mia si tol-  
las?*

Ecc 2

muzzed,

Bern. on  
Ministers  
mainte-  
nance. p. 39.

— *Mise-  
rum est ali-  
ena vivere  
quadrā.*

muzzled; he may not tell his People of their sins, nor Judah of her transgression, lest such Voluntaries become Malecontents, and turn their *Benevolence* into *Malevolence*, (as one truly speaketh). The good Benefactor may not be reproved, lest he be displeased, and so that maintenance lost, whereof the Minister hath no other assurance than their well-pleasing: Many great Men's Chaplains are able to tell you, how miserable a thing it is to live at another man's trencher. And, Who would give themselves to the Study of Divinity, if no better provision were made for them than is for Fidlers, who play at mens Doors and Windows for *your good will, Sir*.

Others, who think it unfit and dangerous for Ministers to depend upon private Contributions, in regard of these manifold mischiefs and inconveniences which must necessarily follow; do yet conceive it most expedient, that Ministers be maintained by Competent stipends, which are to be made certain unto them, by Authority of the Magistrate. But, What certainty can be in that, for which upon every new Change of the Magistrate, the Ministry may be to seek? *New Kings, new Laws*. The Magistrate, who should establish such Stipends, may be wicked; They by whom it should be payd, very inconstant; They who should collect and gather it, very worldly and covetous; which inconveniences such as live upon set-Stipends (as in many of our great Towns and Corporations) find experimentally to be too true; by reason of which uncertainty of maintenance, God's Ministers can conclude certainly, nothing with themselves for their continuance in any place.

Bendes, where such set-Stipends are appointed unto Ministers, there is not that due regard had to the prices of things, which continually rise and fall, as Markets do. This year the price of Corn and Grain, & other Commodities may be double, to that it was two or three years before: And when the Husbandman, Tradesman, or Artificer, raise their prices (as occasion requires), The Stipendary Minister is at his stint, and that Stipend which in a more plentiful year would comfortably maintain him, cannot now find him and his Family, with Food and Raymen.

Lastly,



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Lastly, Whereas the former way of maintaining the Minister by Voluntary Contribution, hath some colour from the practise of Christians in the Primitive times; This of maintaining them in a Stipendary way, hath neither warrant from Scripture, nor any Precedent in all the practise of the Primitive Church, either before, or under the best Emperours; and therefore is disclaimed, as being none of God's Ordinance.

There is a third way of raising the Minister's maintenance, and that is, by Tythes, or setting out the Tenth part of all the Hearers increase; whether *Personal* of meer industry, and negotiation; or *Pradial* as of grounds, &c. or *mixt*, as of Cattle; And to this way the Apostle seems to have an Eye, in that Speech of his, *Gal. 6.6.* Let him that is taught in the word, &c.

My meaning is not to dispute the Poynt, Whether Tythes be due primarily, *Jure Divino*, by Divine right: Enough hath bin sayd, and written by divers men of great Note in our Church, concerning that Argument, (to whose learned Treatises I referr you). But this know, that the Wisdom of God and His Church, both before the Law, and under the Law, and now under the Gospel, hath judged Tythes to be the fittest means to maintain the Ministry; Many hundred of years hath the custom of paying Tythes bin practised in the Church; yea, in this Church of *England*; and still orders and appoints the same maintenance for the Ministry (till some better way be found out, which for any thing yet appears cannot be, nor in all likelihood ever will be).

It is the Speediest, Surest, Easiest, and Safest, manner of payment that may be, (as very reason teacheth us); and of all courses it is the least Subject to alteration: for howsoever the prizes of things do Rise and Fall, and daylie Change; yet the things themselves change not; the Ministers Estate by this means doth alwayes hold correspondency, and proportion with the Estates of their People, in Cheap and Dear years, which maketh his Living constantly answerable unto the times, so that he comes to have a fellow-feeling of his Parishoners prosperity and adversity; and is thereby occasioned to pray and praise God with them, and for them.

Gal 6.6.

B. B.  
 { Andrews  
 Carlton.  
 Montague.  
 Dr.  
 { Reynolds  
 on Obad  
 Wilket.  
 Fulke.  
 Gardiner.  
 { Sclater.  
 Tinsley.  
 Sir.  
 { James  
 Simple.  
 Henry  
 Spilman.  
 Mr.  
 { Eburne  
 Elton.  
 Roberts.  
 Fenton.  
 &c.

But

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But, albeit Tythes have bin antient, and of long standing, and now growen gray with age, yet it happens (as to the aged and decrepit) they are cleane growen out of credit, and lightly let by: And much is objected against them.

Object.

Where do we read that *Christ* or his *Apostles* ever took Tythes, or challenged them (say some)?

Resp.

To this it is answered, that *à facto ad jus non valet consequentia*, It was not done thus or thus, therefore it ought to be done otherwise, is no good consequence. *Israel* payed no Tythe all the while they were in the *Wildernesse*; nor did they for that time circumscribe their Children, is it therefore sound to say, they ought not to do it after?

Secondly, When *Christ* and his *Apostles* Preached the Gospel in *Jury*, all Tythes were in the hands of the *Pharisees*, and could not by any colour of Law be taken from them; To them they were payed: And many years after the *Apostles* time, Persecution and Scandal enforced the Intermision of Paymen, but the Right was not infringed; For afterward, when God was pleased to grant a little rest, and breathing time to the Church, presently came Tythes again to the Minister's portion.

Object.  
Math. 23.  
23.

But doth not our Saviour task the *Pharisees* for Tything of *Mint* and *Cummin*, and brands them for Hypocrites for so doing, *Math. 23, 23*?

Resp.

For Tything *Mint* and *Cummin*, they were neither blamed nor branded, as the words following shew, *These things you ought to have done*: whereby *Christ* signifies (not obscurely) that this manner of Tything in kind, and without Diminution, (even for these small things, and much more for greater), was in use even untill that time, and was Just and Lawful; It was their Hypocrisie that our Saviour reproves, in standing so strictly upon the doing of outward Dutes (which were onely a little costly to them), but more weighty matters they were carelesse of; They were exact, in that which concerned the Tenth part of their Estate, and no more; But they were remisse in general, for just dealing with all other men, and in other matters of the Law.

Object.

But we have heard (from you) before, that Faithful Ministers seek the People's good, and not their own gain; Now what is this, but to take from their People what they work hard for, and to seek theirs, rather than them?

In



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Resp.

In requiring Ty he, they seek not *yours*, but *their own*, and that which they have as good a Right and Title unto, as any one can shew for any State or Land he hath, and better; as being, First, *more Antient*; and Secondly, by a *firmer Charter*; for besides the *divine primary Right* which is by assignation from God himself, they have a *Secondary Right* thereunto by Donation and Grants for many hundreds of years, (and long before the Conquest) confirmed by Lawes and Constitutions of this Kingdom, and others, throughout all Christendom, ever since the Christian Faith flourished.

Secondly, Nor may he justly be esteemed *covetous*, who asketh his own; but he is covetous (and injurious both) who detaineth the *good from the Owner*. *Judah* exclaimeth against the Incontinency of *Thamar* but who was most faulty?

Pro. 3. 27.  
Gen. 28.

Thirdly, In calling for that which is devoted to God and his Worship, they seek not your Riches, but your Righteousnesse; not your wealth, but your well-doing; as *Augustine* speaketh in this very case, they seek the wealth and happiness of your Persons; of your Estates; of your Posterity; & of the whole Church of God: for all are endangered by detaining and keeping back the Minister's maintenance, and he himself is thereby much wronged; which is the second Particular that I promised to inform you of.

Needs must it be a wrong, (and a great wrong too.) to withhold their dues; for as much as they are part of the wages which God hath allotted them, for their work. Hear what *St. James* saith to the Poynter, *Jam. 5. 4.* The hire of the Labourer, which is kept back by fraud, cryeth in the ears of the Lord of Hosts which Phrase is used in heinous and horrible sins; No sin but comes before the Lord, &c. yet, to note the heinousness of some sins, above other, the holy Ghost is pleased to use this expression, that *they cry unto the Lord*, (as did *Cain's* blood *Gen. 4.*) And God heareth the Cry of this sin, and hath denounced a heavy *Woe* against it. *Jer. 22. 13.* Woe unto him that useth his neighbour's Service without Wages, and giveth him not for his work. That *Woe* is a *Milstone* (as small a word as it is) hung about the Neck of him that is guilty of it; yea, better a *Milstone* were about his Neck than that. Now, (to reason from

Jam. 5. 4.

Jer. 22. 13.

from the lesse to the greater ) then, If it be such a crying sin, to with hold the wages of such as reap down the Corn in your fields; and, if it lay us open to so heavy Judgments, to use our Neighbour's service without wages, and not giving him for his work: What is it then (think you) to defraud these spirituall Harvest-men of their wages, and to with-hold from them, that which you are commanded, both by God and Man, to pay them?

There are three sorts of Persons that this concerns, most especially; by whom the Minister sustaineth much dammage in his wages: The First, are our *Lay Impropriators*; The Second, *Corrupt Patrons*; The Third, *Unconscionable Parishioners*, and *Tythers*.

The Alienation of Church Livings, by Impropriations, is a great and crying sin, the bane of the People, and the blemish of our Church (as one speaks truly); for, whereas the whole number of Parish Churches in England and Wales, at this day, is 9248; of them 3895. are impropriated. saith Camden.

I will not spend time about this, having spoken more fully of that sin elsewhere. I shall onely at present acquaint you, with a passage or two, concerning them, which we find in that *Bill of Complaint* which was put up to the Parliament, in the daies of Edward the VI. by one: *Roderich Mors*, who bewailing the want of Preaching in this Kingdom especially in such Parishes where the Tythes are impropriated, hath this Passage; *If a man say to the Farmer, Why have the People no Preacher, seeing you receive the Tythes and Offerings? They will answer, We have hyred the Tythes, of this or that Lord, who is the Parson, or Vicar, and him we pay for them: Well then, I say unto thee, my Lord Parson, or Vicar; Thou dost wrong to have Parsonages and Vicarages, to have the tenth-Pigg, Lamb, Goose, Fleece, and so of all other things, seeing thou art no Minister, nor Priest, of Christ's Church; nor dost any office of a Parson or Vicar, but poll and pill: What canst thou say of thy self, my Lord Parson or Vicar? Thou wilt say peradventure, The King gave me the Abby, and all that belongs therunto which was given him by the Parliament; therefore, if thou speakest against my being a Parson or Vicar, (though I neither preach nor teach, nor yet procure any to do it for me,) thou art a*

*Traitor.*

Camd.  
Brit. p. 162

See my Ex-  
position on  
Luk. 10:15  
p. 168.



*T*rayer; (For this is the 13 Article of our Creed, added of late, that, Whatsoever the Parliament doth must needs be well done;) But how can you, my Lord Parson, defend your self, if a man should bring this Argument against you, and prove you all Thieves (that have Parsonages and Vicarages in your hands, and cannot preach)? Christ saith, John 10. 1. He that entereth not into the sheep-fold by the door, is a Thief and a Murderer; but you entered in another way, and not by the Door: Christ is the Door; but you say that you entered in by an Act of Parliament, and that is not Christ; therefore you are Thieves and Murderers. If this Argument be not strong enough, what say you by this, All they that come before me (saith Christ) are Thieves and Robbers? But you came into the Sheep-fold before Christ; therefore you are Thieves and Robbers: To come in before Christ, is to be a Parson or Vicar before Christ sends him; and you come in before Christ sends you, (for he sendeth none to be Shep herds, but such as he knoweth to be able to feed his Flock;) therefore he never sent you: for he knoweth you to be unable to do that Office. And thus, to conclude, you are Thieves and Robbers; For a Thief cometh not but to steal & kill: Wherefore give over the Parsonages unto learned men, and enter not into other mens Vocations, to rob the Minister, both of his Office and Living, that you be not punished of God: But if ye will needs be Parsons and Vicars, and carry away the profits, you must have also the pains that belong to such Parsons as you be; Hear what Almighty God saith to you, my Lords, who will be Pastors and Parsons, Ezek. 33. If I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt dy the death; and thou speak not unto him to keep the wicked from his way, the wicked his own self shall dy in his wickedness: but his blood will I require at thine hands: Mark well Lord Parson, for this is spoken to all them that are Parsons, and take wages for feeding of God's People and neglect them, And so much of these: He hath said enough; we need say no more.

Joh. 10. 1

Ezek. 33:

*C*orrupt Patrons are the next that defraud the Minister of his wages; These have consecrated things committed to them upon trust, and unto them is referred the Nomination and Presentation of an able, and godly, and religious Clerk, for the receiving and employing of those consecrated things which they are be trusted

A&amp;T.

with : Now, when they shall either, by secret Symonaical Compact, or by pretence of Law, or by Force and Fraud, one way or other, be nibbling, and paring away, of the Revenues of the Minister; and reserve (either before, or after, Presentation,) some part of that maintainance to them due; it is sacrilegious wrong. If it were Sacriledge in *Ananias* and *Saphyra* to keep away part of what *they themselves had consecrated unto God*, when as (not consecrated) all was in their power; Is it lesse than Sacriledge in the'e, to take from God what (not by them, but) many Ages since was given and conecrated to God by *devout men*, for his Worship and Service, and wherewith they are but entrusted? Were a man but put in trust with another man's goods (by Word or Will), to see them imployed to such or such Uses; should he falsify that trust, Would not all condemn him for a godlesse and gracelesse man? What may we think then of those, who turn their *Patronage* into *Pillage*; Trust, into Treachery; defrauding God spoyling his Church, and wronging his Servants, by seeking, in their Presentations, their own filthy gain and lucre? I know there are those (who are Patrons,) so uncorrupt, so upright, and religious, that (I do verily believe) they would not for a World have the guilt of this sacrilegious sin to ly upon their consciences; But these are *Black Swans*, rare Birds; let all such as are so, be had in high account for their Integrity. Corrupt Patrons are those I blame.

Such a one was he (of whom (divers years since) I heard a very goodly Divine make this Relation) who having a good Living in his gift, and then vacant, (and where he himself did dwell) had conference with a friend of his about it, and desired him to think of some poor knave, that would be content to take a set stipend of 50 or 60 l. *per annum*, and that the Tythes (which were worth as much more at least,) should be left to him to dispose of, at his pleasure: This Friend being acquainted with one that used to read, here and there, Service on the Lord's day (as he was desired) in the City; acquaints him with the motion, which is very thankfully embraced by him. But to avoid the danger of the Oath, (which was in those daies given to such as were admitted into Livings,) against Symony: The Patron must not be spoken withall, by his Clerk that he did present; All was done; the



the Possession given; and Harven being come, the Minister (that poor Knave) understanding the worth of the Living, demands his Tythes of the Patron: How (said the Patron)? Did not my Friend and yours acquaint you with my mind? Yea, said the other, He told me that you desired to hear of some poor Knave, that would accept of your Living; and that I was poor all London knowes; and whether I am a Knave or no, judge you: For I will not stand to that agreement which I made with him. I justify neither, in what they did; but yet I think that Patron was met withall in his kind; It was a just punishment of his corrupt dealing.

In a word, the *Unconscionable Parishianer* or *Tyther*, who, either by meer fraud, or open injury, *without colour of Law*, or by pretended Customs, Compositions, Prescriptions, Exemptions, or any other sacrilegious practise, *under colour of Law*, defrauds the Minister of his due, or keeps back any part of his portion, cannot, in so doing, shield himself from the *Woe* denounced against him, for so doing. We have a *Custom* (said the Jews to Pilate), Thou must let *Barabbas* loose, albeit he be a Thief and a Murderer; So, many (in many places) plead, we have a *Custom* to pay little or nothing in stead of Tythes; and this Custom we will hold, albeit you preach your Lungs out; (as if a Custom, that men have got to robb God, would excuse them before God: ) *Be not deceived for God is not mocked. If any man list to be contentious, we have no such Custome, nor the Churches of God;* So, if any list to robb God and his Ministers, we have not (at least ought not to have) any such Custom, to robb our Father and deceive our Mother.

But are all Customs and Compositions for Tythes unwarrantable?

I say not so; but all unjust and unequal Customes are; As that, which at the first springing up of the Custom, was worth but a Groat, and is now worth Ten shillings. And I find in the old Law (when Tythes were most strictly paid) that if men were desirous to redeem their Tythes, and pay mony in lieu of them, it might be done. So now, but not without some Provisoers.

First, It must be with the free and unconstrained consent of the present Incumbent, and not enforced.

Fff 2

Secondly,

Joh. 18. 39

Gal. 6. 7.  
1 Cor. 11.  
16.

Quest.

Resp.

# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

Secondly, That the Composition be reasonable and equitable; that is, answerable (at least) to the present worth of what is redeemed or compounded for.

Thirdly, That it be but for a time, and, at the utmost, that it determines with the present Incumbent; who is but the *usufructuary*, and not the *Proprietary*, of Tythes, he hath but the Use for a time, the Inheritance is God's alone; Wherefore care must be had, that nothing be done by any Minister which may be prejudicial to God's Inheritance, nor to the Rights and Liberties of his Church: If care be not taken, within few Ages God shall have no Tythes in kind to maintain his Church and Ministers, but all will be turned into Customs and Prescriptions; For when the finger of Covetousnesse is once gotten into that which is God's, upon a little continuance (if allowed), Covetousnesse will think it hath hold fast enough to pluck it wholly from the Church, nor will it let go its hold without much rapping: To this purpose I have heard a Scottish Lord should speak to one of their Divines, who condoled the base maintenance of their Ministry, and pleaded for Tythes; You (said the Lord unto him) have preached Tythes into our Purses, and now that they are in, you shall never, with all your Preaching, pull them out again.

Within these few years, the general desire of this, and some other Counties, was for a Composition with the Minister, concerning Tythes, under a pretence of Peace and Quiet, both of the one and other; Minister and People: And what should this Composition be? Why, for so much as the Soyle would naturally yield, and bring forth of it self, without the charge of Tillage or Manuring; which is that you call the tenth of the Rent, or two Shillings in the Pound; and that the Landlord allows: for in letting of his Lands, he so letteth them, as to pay that burthen which lyeth on them; so doth the seller, in making sale of his, at any time, (for if that burthen were taken off, the Purchase or Rent should be raised accordingly,) This was generally desired; Petitions, with many hands thereto, preferred; much money, in some parts of this our County, gathered to prosecute the businesse: And in all likelihood, that Petition had passed, had not divers *Impropriators*, then present in Parliament (in

respect



respect of their own interest say some) made stop of it: Notwithstanding this, many Ministers (especially in this part of our County, *Ad faciendum populum*,) willing to accomodate their People in their desires, (as they had need, coming into their Livings upon a tickle Title,) condescended to their People's request, who now groan under the mischief of it, finding it experimentally true, that the taking of their maintenance in that way which is allowed and appointed by the Magistrate, for those who labour in the Word and Doctrine, is the safest, surest, easiest, and speediest way (as before was said): But still the covetous desires of many are unsatiable, and think they are not low enough; they deal by their Minister, in their Compositions, as we do by an Onyon, take off Pill after Pill, so long till they leave nothing but tears in the Eye; Or else, if they promise payment (for what they have compounded), they are so long about it (like the School-boy who is about to receive his payment from his Master, so long in fumbling about his Ho'e) that the Minister (like the Master), weary with long stay, had rather forgive them, than to wait so long upon them, or send so often to them for it.

But, be it known unto you, that these and the like unjust practices, are not onely *Injury* to men, but *Impiety* against God. The style of all ancient Deeds and Grants, belonging to the Church, run in this form, *We have given unto God, both for us and for our heirs for ever: To the Lord our God we offer and dedicate whatsoever we deliver unto his Church* (said Charls the Great). Now, can you think it any other than what is said, to rob the Minister of his due? It is Robbery, and that in a high degree; and such a Thievery that very Heathens, and Pagans, are ashamed of: Me-thinks, if men did but seriously think of the Curie denounced against *the House of the Thief*; and more especially against the House of that Thief, the *Church-Robber*, that sacrilegious Thief, *Mal. 3. 9.* And of the soar and severe Judgments which have been inflicted in all Ages, visibly, and apparently, on such Thievs; It should cause their mouths to leave watering after Church-morsells. But (I dare say) you think that I have been too long already upon this Subject, which in your Judgments doth not so well become a Pulpit; but if *Moses*, the

Mag. Chart  
c. 1.  
Capit. Car.  
1. 6. c. 28:

Zach. 5. 2.  
3.  
Mal. 3. 3.

Prophets,

Prophets and Apostles have wrote so much, and spoke so often of this matter; it may very well beseem the mouth of the Minister to speak in the cause of God, his Church, and Gospel. But is there nothing to be inferred from hence which concerns the Minister? Yes without doubt, and I will shew you.

Use 3.

1 Tim. 3.  
13.

Such as intend to take this Calling upon them, must resolve to buckle to the work, and not dream of pleasure, and an idle Life: Peter's Chair is not to sit and sleep in; *Qui Episcopatum desiderat*, &c. (saith the Apostle) *He that desires the Office of a Bishop, desires a worthy Work. Opus, non dignitas; labor, non delicia* (saith Jerom). It is a Work, not dignity; a labour, not a delicacy: And to Preach the Gospel truly, is (as Luther sometimes spake) little lesse then to raise up the rage and fury of all the Country; and therefore, when one defined the Ministerial function to be *Artem Artium, & Scientiam Scientiarum*, The Art of Arts, and Science of Sciences; Melancthon sayd, If he had defined it to be *Miseriam Miseriarum*, the Misery of Miseries, he had hitt it right.

Rom. 2. 21

And being entered into this painful Calling; let them see that they take pains in it: We Preach against idlenesse in other Callings, and shall we our selves be addicted to so base a sin? In so doing, what do we other then give place to that reproof; *Thou that teachest another, dost thou not teach thy self; Thou that preachest against idlenesse, art thou an idler?* In the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's Raign, I have read that one Preaching in Christs-Church Canterbury, (when men indeed were very backward in Preaching) he spake by a *Prosopopeia* to the Pulpit, after this manner. Oh good Pulpit! how hast thou offended the Cannons of Christ's Church? If thou wert an ambling Nagg, they would ride thee; if a Bed of down, they would sleep on thee; if a good Garment, they would weare thee: Alas, good Pulpit, what hast thou done, that none would come near thee to Preach in thee? Shall any Pulpit in these dayes complain against any Pulpit-man after that manner: when we have more abilities, more knowledge then they in those Dayes? Our Pulpits in these Dayes, are better supplied then formerly; Yet by the like *Prosopopeia*, we may speak to the Table of the Lord, Oh! Holy Table, wherein hast thou offended, that thou art so little regarded;



gared; wert thou furnished with delicates, for the Body to pamper that, thou shouldst be resorted unto, &c. But what is thy offence? How, and with what conscience can such receive the wages, that do not the Work? and require maintenance from the Altar, that work not at the Altar? A sad Wo is denounced against such, Ezek. 34. 2, 3. *Wo unto the Shepherds of Israel that feed themselves: should not the Shepherds feed the Flocks? ye eat the Fat, and Cloath you with the Wool, ye kill them that are fed, but you feed not the Sheep; Therefore, wo unto you for your idleness and greediness.*

St. Paul speaking in his own commendation, mentions his *abundant labours*, 2 Cor. 11. 23. And indeed this is one of the greatest commendations that belongs unto a Minister, that he is laborious, and painful in his Calling: This was that, for which the Bishops and Martyrs in former times were so highly extolled and commended. St. *Austine* tells us of St. *Ambrose* Bishop of *Milaine*, that he heard him preaching the Word of Truth unto the People, *Omni Dominico*, Every Lords-Day: And *Possidonius* writeth of St. *Austin*, Bishop of *Hippo*, that he taught and preached privately and publicly in the House and in the Church, after the practise of St. Paul, by the space of three years, not ceasing to warn every one Night and Day with tears. And by the Homilies or Sermons of the Fathers it appears, that they did often Preach Daylie without intermission unto the People: *Chrysostome* begins many of his Sermons with his *xps*, Yesterday, this and this I taught you. *Bernard* concludes with his *Cras*, To morrow I will shew you, &c. They preached in the afternoon, as well as in the forenoon, as appears in *Basil's* second Homily upon the six dayes work: and sometime by Candle-Light, as appears by the note which *Chrysostome* hath on 1 *Thes.* 5. 17. where he fetcheth a Similitude from the Lamp that he was preaching by. I might add to these the indefatigable pains of the men of God of later times, as of *Luther*, *Zwinglius*, *Oecolampadius*, *Bucer*, *Calvin*, *Peter Martyr*, *Jewel*, with divers others; all which were very diligent and laborious in their Ministerial employment, to their eternal praise: But as we read of the Duke of *Urbins* Painter, who being commanded to draw the shape of *Paul* and *Peter*, he drew the faces of them somewhat

red,

Ezek. 34.  
2, 3.

1 Cor. 15.  
10.  
2 Cor. 11.  
23.  
Aug. Confes. 1. 6. c. 3.

See Mr.  
*Foltons*  
sure and  
perpetual  
guide. pag.  
205.

redd : And being asked the reason of it, answered, that they indeed were somewhat pale with preaching often ; but were they now alive, they would blush to see the laziness of their Successors : So it may be sayd of those Worthyes above-mentioned, (whom some so often have made mention of in their monthly and quarterly Sermons), Were they alive, they would blush to hear their names mentioned by such, as yet condemn their Prastise by their idlenesse and sloath. Let the shame lye upon the Romish Clergy, but let us of the Reformation (as we are called), *give attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, and Doctrine, and Preach the Word in season, and out of season, as we are required,*

1 Tim. 4.

13.

2 Tim. 4. 2.

1 Tim. 4. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 2.

Use 4.

And give me leave, to leave a Word of Exhortation with you that hear us, and partake of our pains and labours (before I leave the Poynt) : You seem sometimes to pity us, and confesse that we take great pains in our Callings : Now it lyes in you to ease us, and make our Labours lightsome : Not by ditcharging us from Labouring, but by sweetning it. All our toyle and labour is swallowed up in beholding your Fruitfulnesse and Obedience. A rich and plentiful Crop, causeth the Husbandman in time of Harvest to rise up early ; not as to labour, but as to sport and pastime : So it is with us, The onely Cordial, and sweet Reflective after all our toylsome labour, is, the good successe of our labours ; And this was *Chrysostom's* refreshment, his Auditors gain to refreshed him, as to take away all sense of pain in Preaching ; But, on the other side, then is our Ministry a toylsome work indeed, when after a great deal of soare labour, our People remain still stubborn and obstinate : The *hardnesse of our labour* is not so grievous to us, as the *hardnesse of your hearts* ; Let us therefore be refreshed by your obedience, this is that which puts Life and Spirit in us. And so we passe from this, and come to the Particulars promised by the Dresser,

Ch. yf. ad  
pop. Hom. 9.

Text.

*I shall Digg about it.]*

By this Digging, may be safely understood the Legal part of his Ministerial function, which stands in the discovery of mans cursed Estate by Nature : Look as the Spade being rightly used, discovers the Root that is within the Ground ; and by taking away the Earth that is about it, layes it open and bare, and fits and



and prepares the Earth to receive moisture for its nourishment ; So by the Preaching of the *Law*, comes the knowledge of sin. The naughty heart of man is discovered, all Pleas for sin are removed, and the Soul thereby becomes fitted and prepared to receive the moisture of Grace. Thus understanding the meaning ; let the Observation be this.

*Digging is one part of the Ministerial function ; that is, An effectual discovery of sin, and laying open of mans natural estate is a principal part of the Minister's Office.*

*Cry aloud (saith God to Isaiah), spare not, lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet, and shew my People their transgressions, and the House of Jacob their sins, Isa. 58. 1. Cry aloud, let it be done feelingly, and with affection, spare not ; Let it be without any partiality, Lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet ; Let it be done Zealously and Vehemently. Shew my People their transgressions, and the House of Jacob their sins, and that plainly and particularly. In this manner God hath commanded his Servants to reprove sin, and lay it open. Affectionately, Impartially, Zealously and Particularly ; The like Charge is given to Ezekiel, Cap. 16. 2. Son of Man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations. And that we may not think that this was required onely of those who lived under the Law ; you shall find the like enjoyned to Ministers under the Gospel : I Charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall Judge the quick, and the dead at His appearing, and in His Kingdome : Preach the Word ; be instant in season, and out of season, Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort with all long-suffering and Doctrine, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. Where observe, that this Duty of our Ministry is twice pressed upon us, Reprove, Rebuke ; and then we must be Instant in it, or (as the word signifies) stand much upon it, or clothe to it ; And this is imposed with a sad and dreadful adjuration ; I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, that thou dost this, &c. as if he should say, Thou canst never answer it to God, and to Jesus Christ at the Day of Judgment, if thou dost it not. And thus, for our Example, did the Prophets, Apostles, and Christ himself, the Lord of all, discover and lay open unto sinners their wicked wayes, as will evidently appear, if you peruse these Texts amongst many others, 1 King. 18. 18. Hos. 5. 1. Luke 3. 19. Math. 3. 7.*

Ggg

Acts

Rom. 7. 7,  
9.

Doff.

Isa. 58. 1.

Ezek. 16. 2

2 Tim. 4. 1,  
2.

1 King 18.

18.

Hos. 5. 1.

Luke 3. 19.

Math. 3. 7.

Acts 2. 23,  
& 24. 25.  
Math. 23.  
13, 33.

Acts 2. 23, & 24, 25. Math. 23. 13, 33.

This is so necessary a Duty, and so usual in the Ministry of God's Faithful Servants, as that it is made a note of difference betwixt true Prophets and false; and renders a Minister Faithful in his function. *The Prophets make my People to err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace. &c. But truly, I am full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord (saith Michah), and of Judgment, and of Might to declare unto Jacob his transgressions,* Mich. 3. 5, 8. as if he should say, I am none of those smoothening Prophets, who, so they may be fed up with the largesses of the People, cry Peace and Happiness; but, by the Spirit of the Lord, I am filled with courage, and undaunted zeal, with true Judgment, and bold resolution, to declare unto *Jacob* their transgressions, wherewith they have transgressed. And the neglect of this discovery of sin, is made the proper mark of a false Prophet, Lament. 2. 14. *Thy Prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee, and they have not discovered thine Iniquity, to turn away thy Captivity, but have seen for thee false burthens, and causes of banishment.*

Mic. 3. 5, 8.

Lament. 2.  
14.

Reas. I.

Joh. 16. 8.

Joh. 4. 18,  
19.

Vers. 29.

1 Cor. 14.  
24, 25.

This is not onely a part of the will of God which we are commanded to make known unto our People, but as necessary a part to Salvation, as any other; and without which, no other part will become fruitful; without this discovery of sin, there can be no conviction wrought, as appears, *John 16. 8.* The *will* follows the *Understanding*; and, till that be enlightened, Pleas and Excuses for sin will not be removed: How boldly and malepartly did the *Woman of Samaria* discourse with Christ, before her foul sin that she lived in, was discovered unto her, *John 4. 18.* and all things told her, that ever she did, *verse 29?* and then she began to have her conscience awakened, and to reverence Christ as a Prophet, *verse 19.* and to acknowledge Him to be the Saviour of the World, *vers. 29.* This kind of Preaching is it, which makes men feel, and acknowledge the mighty Power of God in His Ordinances: When the Hearer seeleth himself to be convicted of all, and judged of all, and that the secrets of his heart are manifested to him, then he falls down and worships God, and is enforced to say, *God is in you of a truth,* 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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Again, till mens sins are effectually discovered unto them in the *glosse of the Law*, they can never attain to any soundnesse of Faith, nor any other saving grace. Hence it is, that *St. Paul* wills *Tim* to *rebuke the Grecians, sharply*, or, to the quick, that *they may be sound in the Faith*, *Tir. 1. 13.* Nor is there any other ordinary way to attain true comfort. When God appeared to *Eliab*, there was first a mighty *strong winds*, that did rend the *Rock*, and then an *Earth-quake*, and after that, a *terrible fire*; and then came a *still Voyce*, full of Comfort: So when God's Ministers, by the Tempest of the Law, have rent the rocky hearts of men, and made them in a manner at their wits end, so that they come trembling and crying with the *Jaylor*, *What shall I do to be saved?* then is the season for the Voyce of Peace and Comfort, and not before: And this is the course that the Spirit of God in self takes (who is the Comforter) in bringing God's Elect to true Comfort, *John 16. 8.* God's Spirit never comforted any, before he had reprov'd him, and convinced him of his sinful and damnable estate. The Spirit of bondage must alwayes go before the Spirit of Adoption, *Rom. 8. 15.* In his first operation, he rebukes them of sin, in whom he worketh, and lets them see that bondage and slavery under which they lye, which works fear in them; but in his second operation, he is a Spirit of Adoption, comforting them with a sight of God's mercy in Christ Jesus.

Hence, we may be informed of the great necessity, both of teaching and learning the *Law of God*, (the sum whereof we have in the ten Commandements), by which we attain to the Knowledge of sin, *Rom. 7. 7.* without the knowledge of that, corruption of nature lyes as it were dead in us, *Rom. 7. 8.* It lyes hid, and is not discovered; men have no sense of inward corruption, no touch of conscience in respect of it, (as the Apostle speaks in his own particular case) *verse 9.* But when the Law comes, then sin appears to be sin; the very Root of sin (Original corruption) is layd open, and appears to be sin.

This is a Doctrine much opposed by the Familists, Anabaptists, Antinomists, and other Libertines; who, under pretence of Christian Liberty, cry down the Law, as nothing at all belonging to Christians, affirming, that they that are in Christ, have

*Tir. 1. 13.*  
*Ἀποστό-  
μος.*

*1 King. 19.*  
*11.*

*Act. 16. 30.*

*Joh. 16. 8.*

*Rom. 8. 15*

*Use 1.*

*Rom. 7. 7,*  
*8.*

*Verse 9.*

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nothing to do with it, but are out of the reach of it: A pettulent error, and of dangerous consequence! For, from hence they infer.

First, That God can see no sin in his Children, for as much as he can see no Law transgressed; contrary to that we read, *Jer. 23.* 24. *Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him?* *Plal. 69. 5.* *My sins are not hid from thee (saith David), Heb. 4. 13.* *All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with, whom we have to do.*

Secondly, That a man being in Christ cannot sin if he would, for where there is no Law, there is no transgression; So that, *Be in Christ* (say they), and *sin if thou canst*: Yet we read otherwise in Scripture, *Jam. 3. 2.* *In many things we sin all,* *1 John 1. 8.* *If we say we have no sin, the truth is not in us.*

Thirdly, That the Gospel takes away all obedience to the Commandments, and that Faith hath nothing to do with, Doing and Working: and yet (saith the Apostle) *Faith without Works is dead,* *Jam. 2. 17, 18, 20.* and the Scripture calls for *Doing,* *John 14. 23.* *1 John 2. 17, & 3. 7.*

Fourthly, That justified persons have nothing to do with Repentance; Albeit, we read that the Church of Ephesus and Pergamum are called upon to repent, *Revel. 2. 5, 16.* Nor is any Believer (say some of these) to pray for pardon of sin, albeit Christ hath taught every one that calls God Father, to pray daylie for forgiveness, *Math. 6. 12.*

Fifthly, They teach, that such as call upon us for good works, and presse obedience to the Law, are Legal Preachers, and that they Preach Popery, and have Popes in their Bellies: Albeit we have for our pattern herein both Christ and his Apostles who pressed on believers obedience to the Law, *Math. 5. 17, 19.* — *Tit. 3. 14.*

These, and many such like inferences (which a good heart cannot but tremble at) are daylie broached by these Sectaries, all tending to licentiousness, and grounded upon this erroneous Tenent, That the Law is not (now under the Gospel) to be taught, nor pressed by Ministers on their Hearers; for that we are not now under the Law, but under Grace, (as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 6.* 14.)



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But these have not learned that distinction, which learned *Zanchy* makes: The Law is two ways to be considered (saith he); First, in the *Substance* of it; Secondly, in the *Accidents* or *Circumstances* belonging to it: If we consider the *Substance* of it, as it is the *sum of Doctrine*, concerning piety, shewing what is good, and what is evil; so Believers are still under it, and stand fast bound both for the performance of all holy Duties of it, and for the avoyding and forbearance of all evils therein prohibited: But, if we consider the *Accidents* or *Appendices* of it, as it is a rigorous Exactor of perfect and personal obedience upon pain of Death, &c. so Believers are not under it, for as many as are under it, are under the Curse, Gal. 3. 10. But *Christ* hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, by being made a Curse for us, Gal. 3. 13. Thence it is that *Christ* is said to be the end of the Law to every one that believeth, Rom. 10. 4. and that the Faithful are said to be free from the Law, Rom. 6. 7. delivered from the Law, dead to the Law, Rom. 7. 4. Gal. 2. 19. And to be no longer under the Law, Rom. 6. 14. Gal. 5. 18.

The same distinction for *Substance* doth another excellent Casuist of our times make, (but far more clear and perspicuous), The Law (saith he) may be considered, either as a *Rule*, or as a *Covenant*. *Christ* hath freed all Believers from the Rigour and Curse of the Law, considered as a *Covenant*; but he hath not freed them from the Obedience of the Law, considered as a *Rule*. The Law considered as a *Covenant*, is Rigorous, and exacteth punctual and personal performance of every thing that is therein contained, with a condition annexed of God's acceptance, and of blessing if we perform it; but of his Curse and Wrath to fall upon us, if we sayl in any poynt or tittle thereof: Now by reason of transgression, this *Covenant* is broken so, as by it no flesh living can be saved. From the Law (thus considered) we are freed by *Christ*, He subjecting himself for our sakes unto it; In his own person he fulfilled the conditions of it, (as our surety) and so disannulled it; and, instead thereof, established a better *Covenant* for us, even the *Covenant* of Grace, under which all believers are, Heb. 8. 6.

But if you consider the Law, as a *Rule of Life*, which sheweth us onely what is good, and what is bad, Mich. 6. 8. with-  
out

*Zanch.* in  
Eph. 2. 106.  
§ de Leg.  
Mos. abro-  
gatione  
Sect. 9.

Gal. 3. 10.  
Verse 13.  
Rom. 10. 4  
Rom 6. 7.  
Rom. 7. 4.  
Gal. 2. 19.  
Rom. 7. 14  
Gal. 5. 28.

Dr. Saun-  
derson 7  
Ser. ad pop.  
on 1 Pet. 2.  
16.

Gal. 3. 11.

Heb. 8. 6.

Mich. 6. 8.

out any condition annexed, either of Reward, if we observe it; or of Punishment, if we transgress it; So Be ieverers are still under it, and not freed from it: for the Law, thus considered, can no more be abolished, and changed, than in the nature of good and evil: Thus (hen) we are to understand, that all those Scriptures which speak of the Law, as *abrogated* or annulled, do consider it as a *Covenant*: Those again that speak of the Law, as *still in force*, understand it as a *Rule*. This one distinction heeded and applied rightly, is sufficient to clear the whole point, concerning the abrogation and obligation of the Moral Law, under the New Testament; and cut off many needlesse curiosities which lead men into error (saith my Authour). If any desire to have a fuller satisfaction concerning this controversie, I refer him to that excellent Tract, written by Dr. Taylor concerning it: where the Objections of Sectaries, and the Answers thereto, are fully and plainly declared, and layd down.

Dr. Taylor,  
his *Regula  
Vita.*

Use 2.

1 Cor. 4. 2.  
Acts 20.

Joh. 3. 19.

Math. 7. 6.

Prov. 26. 3.

Object.

Mark. 16.  
15.

Resp.

I shall proceed, in speaking a word or two by way of *Defence* or *Apology*, for such Ministers as are Faithful in the Legal part of their Ministry, in discovering sin to be sin: It is a part of the Will of God, and (if they would be counted Faithful) they must deliver the whole counsel of God unto their People, and keep nothing back. Yea, it is that part of the Word, which is the portion of the greatest part of the World. Are not most men under the Curse of the Law, and wrapped up in that great condemnation, pronounced by Christ upon the World, *Joh. 3. 19*? No naturall man, no impenitent person hath any part in any other part of the Word but this: *Childrens Bread may not be cast to Doggs, nor precious Pearls to Swine; To the Horse belongs a Whip, and a Rod for the Fool's back, Prov. 26. 3.*

But you (say some) are *Preachers of the Gospel of Peace*, and should come with the Olive Branch of Peace, and Mercy in your mowthes; nor is it in your Commission, *Go preach the Law*, but *Go ye and preach the Gospel, Mark. 16. 15.*

We are (indeed) to Preach Peace, and to this we are called; But when, and to whom must the glad tydings be Preached? Shall we Preach Peace before men see the want of Peace; or God's Grace and Mercy to a gracelesse heart that sins presumptuously; we would gladly, at every Sermon, say nothing but,

Peace.



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*Peace be to this Audience:* But our God saith, *There is no Peace to the Wicked;* and bids defiance to such, *Isa. 57. 21.* and not a word of Comfort in the Scripture to such as regard wickedness in their hearts, *Psal. 66. 18.* And how then shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange Land? Say that one be desperately sick, and at the point of Death; should another come and tell him of Lordships, Mannors, great Purchases, &c. would not this be unseasonably spoken? would he not (it least might he not) answer, *Redde me sanum, tum Fac me divitem;* first restore me to health, then tell me of Purchases: Most mens Souls are sick of sin, and at Death's door; Never tell them of Heaven, and an Immortal Kingdome, till they be first recovered from the jawes of Hell, and delivered out of the snares of the Devil. It is unseasonable to apply the Oyl of consolation, till your wounds are scoured with the sharp wine of reprehension: when we behold your Cheeks blubbered with tears; your hands beating your Breasts; when we hear your loud cries at the throne of Grace for mercy; Then is the time to say, *Peace be unto you, Your sins be pardoned.*

Secondly, We are deceived in thinking that by vertue of our Commission, we have not to meddle with Legal comminations or threatnings, or are not thereby called to denounce damnation against impenitent ones; *He that believeth, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned;* That is the tum of our Commission, *Mark 16. 16.* So that it appears evidently, that the Preaching of the Gospel is a Preaching both of *Salvation and Damnation,* upon the several conditions: when we Preach the Law, we Preach *Salvation* to them, whose heart melts, as did *Josiah's* upon the hearing of it, and the Lord shewed him mercy, *2 Chron. 34. 27.* And when we Preach the Gospel, we Preach *damnation* to them that despise it. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation,* (saith the Apostle, *Heb. 2. 2, 3.*) And to the Apostle, in denouncing Gods judgments against the *Gentiles*, for the breach of the Law of nature, and pressing the Doctrine of the Day of Judgment, counts of it, as Preaching of the Gospel, *Rom. 1. 16.* And so,

Thirdly, *Intentionally* we Preach nothing but Sa'vation, we never Preach the Law but with reference, and mannduction unto Christ; and so we manage the dispensation of it, that it still appears to be an *Appendant* on the Gospel.

And

*Isa. 57. 21.*

*Psal. 66. 18*

*Psal. 137. 4*

*Mark 16. 16.*

*2 Chron. 34. 27.*

*Heb. 2. 2, 3*

*Rom. 1. 16.*

And yet these are the *Legal Preachers*, that are so much cryed out upon, and complained of in these dayes for being tart and sower, and preaching nothing but Hell and Damnation: these *Boanerges*, sons of thunder cannot be endured by many; some sweet-tongued *Zedkiah*, that would speak *pleasing things* unto them, are the onely men that they delight to hear: But let me tell you, that that Minister that layes not open sin before the eyes of the conscience, so as to convince the sinner of his guiltinesse, and take away all cavils and carnal shifts, and enforceth the Soul to say, This is the very Word of God (albeit he will not entertain it), he shall never find his work to prosper in his hand, nor his Ministry to be successful: It was *John's rough preaching* that made way for Christ; The *Axe to the Root*, the *Fann to the Floor*, the *Chaff to the Fire*; *Plausibility* (saith one) is no fit Preface to Regeneration; never will Christ come into that Soul where the Herald of Repentance hath not bin before him: Nor will that Ministry which works no smart, ever work any cure; there is no profit, nor cure in skinning festers unsearched; and there can be no searching of a wound without smart and pain. Whilst we are no further then the dead flesh, you can be quiet; but when you once come to the quick, then we shall be sure to hear of you.

Wherefore, let me advise you all to submit to this Legal part of our Ministry, and be content to be digged about, and layd open; so as to be shewed what you are: we desire not to shame you, but our desire is, the Salvation of you. To what purpose is it to offer a Salve to them that know not of any soare, or to prescribe Physick to those that know not of any disease they have? *Math. 9. 12, 13.* and we do no other in speaking of Grace & Christ to those, that as yet are insensible of their misery. No kind of Preaching finds more opposition, than this manner of plain Preaching; and the reason is, for that by it the eye of the Soul comes to be opened, and a man's sins and abominations are better discovered thereby, then otherwise they would. It is in this case as it was with *Tully*, who pleading against *Verrus* for his bribery; omitted his usual Oratory, and Rhetorical Oration; and put the Case in plain terms, produced the Witnesses, saying, This is the Crime and the Accusation, who can gain-  
say

B. B. Hall.  
Cont. in  
Nov. Test.  
Lib. 2. on  
Christ's Bap-  
tism.

Use 3.

Math. 9.  
12, 13.



say it? *Hortensius*, the other Advocate, considering the clearness of the Case, and manifest eviſtion, refused to plead one word in the defense thereof; and *Verres*, his Client, yielded himself thereupon to a voluntary Banishment.

But men, in these daies, have not the Honesty of that *Verres*, nor the Bashfulness of that Heathen *Hortensius*; they will support a shameful Sin against the very Letter of the Law, and such a Tally as goes thus plainly to work with them, shall have his Tongue pricked with a Needle. The Widdow of *Sarepta* complained of the Prophet, when her Child was dead, *What have I to do with thee, thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to bring my sins to remembrance?* 1 King. 17. 18. But if you have not to do with us, we must have to do with you; Our business is not to slay your Souls, but to awaken your consciences, which will not be with sweet words, *Jer. 6. 14.*

1 King. 17.  
18.

Jer. 6. 14.

And put case that thou seeſt the need of a Physician, and haſt thy curſed Eſtate by nature diſcovered unto thee, ſo that thou art already converted by the Goſpel; yet the menaces and terrors of the Law are not altogether needleſſe for thee to hear: For, albeit the Law is not to be urged againſt the Perſon of a Believer, yet it is to be urged againſt the ſin remaining, and the Corruption of a Believer; the beſt, being but ſanctified in part, may ſometimes abuſe the Grace of God to wantonneſſe, and have need to be daily humbled under a ſight and ſenſe of their Corruptions; the beſt may ſlack their pace, and have need of ſpurs, and goads, to haſten them in the way of well-doing; ſo that the hearing of the Law (in that reſpect) is not altogether unprofitable for ſuch: Even in the ſtate of Innocency, there was uſe of a threatening to keep our ſinful Parents from tranſgreſſing; much more have the beſt of us need of the laſh of the Law, ſometimes, in this lapsed eſtate, wherein we now are, to work us to Repentance and Humility for our failings, which are many and daily.

Now, To induce you, patiently to ſubmit to this Legall part of our Office; I ſhall deſire you to take theſe things into conſideration,

Fiſt, There is not a more certain note of a wicked heart than to ſhun the Miniſtry; that diſcovers ſin plainly, and layes

Joh. 3. 20.  
2 King 21.  
20. & 22.  
8.  
Mark 4.  
17, 18.  
Act. 24. 26

it open before the eyes of the Conscience: *He that doth evil hateth the Light* (saith Christ), *neither cometh he to the Light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd*, Joh. 3. 20. And by this was the Hypocrisy of *Ahab* discovered, 1 King. 21. 20. & 22. 8. and of *Herod*, Mark 4. 17, 18. and of *Felix*, Acts 24. 26. He that cannot endure to have his Conscience touched, is, without all doubt, fettered and galled; or that would not see his face, is conscious of the deformity, or foulness of it.

Rom. 7. 22

Psal. 139.  
25, 24.

Secondly, That it is the Property of a good heart, to delight in the Law of God, in the inner man, *Rom. 7. 22*. he found much pleasure and sweetness in it (as the word signifieth), so far as he was regenerated and renewed by Grace. The Joy of a godly Soul is to be searched and anatomized by the Word: *Search me O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me*, was David's Prayer, *Psal. 139. 23, 24*. Questionlesse, the Prophet knew much by himself; but he knew that his heart was deceitful, and his desire was to have the secret corners of his heart discovered, and that God would take the pains with him, to discover unto him what was lurking close and unespied: The like desire hath an upright heart, in coming to the Word. Oh that God would discover, this day, unto me some of my secret lusts and corruptions! that he would direct the tongue of his Minister, so that he may come home unto me, and speak to my Conscience to awaken it! that he would prick me in the right vein, that I might bleed kindly! And whilst God's Minister is carving and distributing to one, Reproof; to another, Exhortation; to another, Comfort; &c. a good heart will be lifted to God, and say, Good God, let me have something spoken home to my Conscience; and will be thinking (as sometimes those do that sit at the lower end of the Table at some Feast,) what, will that dish never come down? I keep my stomach for it: Will not God's Minister meet with my Sin, my Corruption? Oh that he would! I look for it, long for it: and when thou art carved unto, and hast thy portion, (if thy heart be good,) then thou wilt not rise without giving thanks; Thou wilt say with *Ely*, *The Word that God hath spoken is good* (albeit it be sharp), and blessed be his Name for his good Word, which is brought this day to me



me by his Servant, whereby I see my sins and failings more clearly than formerly I did.

Thirdly, He is far from having his sins pardoned, that is not willing to have them discovered, without which, the heart will never be pricked with godly sorrow for them; and, without that, no remission can be hoped for, *Psal. 32. 1, — 6.*

*Psal. 32.  
1, — 6.*

Fourthly, In shunning and avoiding this part of our Ministry, for fear of having thy heart troubled, by having thy sins discovered thereby, thou dealest therein very foolishly; for as much as the same Ministry, which casteth down a Sinner, is sanctified by God to lift him up again; the same hand that launcheth, commonly healeth: The Story tells us, (if we may believe it,) that those who were wounded by the darts of *Achilles*, could no otherwise be cured than with his Salves and Plaisters: We find in sacred Scripture (and that we are bound to believe), that those who are wounded by the Reprehensions of God's Ministers, are soonest cured by Their receipts; and that it is God's usual manner, to heal by that very hand wherewith the wound was made: The same *Nathan* that condemns *David*, absolves him; By *Isaiah's* Ministry was *Hzekiah* humbled, and by his Ministry likewise he shall be comforted; By *St. Peter's* sharp Doctrine the Jews hearts were pricked, and by the same Person, and Ministry, their hearts shall be revived, &c. Thou must expect one time or other, that thy Conscience will be awaked, and thy sins discovered unto thee (as God hath said *Psal. 30. 21.*); and when God shall wound thy Conscience, by any other means than by the Ministry of the Word, thou canst not have any such comfortable assurance, to have thy heart quieted again, as thou maist in those troubles that arise in thee by the Ministry of God's Servants, which thou shalt find shall cure thee as well as wound thee, if thou cleave constantly unto i: For it is our Office whereunto we are called, not onely to digg about the Figg-Tree, but to dung it likewise, as you find in the Text. *I will digg about it [and dung it.]*

*2 Sam. 12.  
13.  
Isa. 38. 1,  
3, 4, 5.  
Act. 2. 37,  
38, 41.*

*Psal. 30. 21*

*And dung it.]*

So doth the good Husbandman, after he hath opened the Roots of his Trees, and laid them bare; he cherisheth them with good dung, and compost, that they may become fruitfull;

*Text,*

the former is to little purpose, if the latter be wanting. This course doth the Dresser of the Vineyard promise to take with this barren Figg-Tree; he will not onely *digg about it*, but *dung it* likewise, and to perform the *Evangelicall* part of his Office, in speaking comfortable things to the Soul that is cast down and humbled. You see then,

*Dott.*

*God's Ministers are to dung as well as digg.*

They are not onely to discover sin, and convince the Conscience thereof, by laying of it open; but they are likewise, by applying of the Comforts and Promises of the Gospel, to work the heart to *Godly Sorrow*, and true remorse for it.

1 Cor. 14. 3

He that prophesieth (saith the Apostle) *speaketh to Edification, to Exhortation, and to Comfort*, 1 Cor. 14. 3. as if he should say, No man preacheth, or divideth, the Word aright, if he omits this, and doth not apply his Doctrine to the comfort of such as stand in need thereof.

Gen. 2. 9,

27.

Ver. 15.

This was the practise of God himself; for no sooner had man transgressed, but God calls him to an account, examines him concerning that he had done, passeth Sentence against him for it, Gen. 3. 9, 17. Here was the *digging* about him: But He leaveth not Man in that condition, but makes a *Promise*, that *the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's head*, ver. 15. and that was as laying compost to the Root, to keep it from withering.

Isa. 61. 1, 2

Luk. 4. 18;  
19.

Luk. 10. 34  
Mat. 12. 20

Isa. 39. 6.

And this Method hath God prescribed to all his Servants; It was given in charge to Christ, the Head-Dresser of the Vineyard, that he should *bind up the broken heart, and comfort all that mourned in Zion*, Isa. 61. 1, 2. which Text Christ applyeth unto himself (so we cannot doubt, but of him it is to be understood, Luk. 4. 18, 19.): And his whole life was a Comment upon that Text; He was that good *Samaritan*, that powred in both *Wine* and *Oyl* into the wounds of him that was spoyled by Thieves, Luk. 10. 34. he never *brake any bruised Reed*, but strengthened it; nor *quenched any smoking Wick*, but enkindled it, Mat. 12. 20. And this Charge was given to the Inferiour Dressers; As to the Prophets before the coming of Christ. *Isaiah* prophesying unto *Hezekiah*, that all that was in his House, his Sons, and his Children, should be carried away captive into *Babylon*, Isa. 39. 6.



was presently commanded to *speake comfortably* to God's People (notwithstanding that), *Isa. 40. 1. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my People, &c.* Which Charge is likewise to be extended to the Ministers of the Gospel (for of the Ministry of the Gospel, the Prophet beginneth there to speak).

*Isa. 40. 1.*

Examples, both in the Old and New Testament, are very many, that might be produced for confirmation of the Poynt; *Moses* having digged about the Israelitish Figg-Tree, by repeating and applying the Law unto them, in the first 17 Chapters of *Deuteronomy*, comes in the 18 Chapter of the same Book, and there telleth them, that *God would raise them up a Prophet from amongst their Brethren*; and so goeth on in the delivery of the Gospel, laying Dung, and Manure (as it were), at the Root of that Tree which he had before opened. Thus *Samuel* proceeded with the People: he first discovers unto them their wickednesse; convinceth them of the greatnesse of their Sin of Ingratitude; workes their hearts to a mourning for it, *1 Sam. 12. 17, 18, 19.* that was his digging about their Root; and that being done, he proceeds to dung it; *Fear not* (saith he), *you have done all this great wickednesse, yet turn not aside from following of the Lord*, ver. 20. And such was *Nathan's* proceedings with *David*, *2 Sam. 12. 7,* — *12.* he first shews him his Sin, and upon his humiliation, did not onely assure him of his Remission, ver. 12. but brings him comfortable Tidings, for the farther reviving of his sad Soul, that the other Son, which *Bathsheba* bare unto him, should be called *Jedidiah*, Beloved of the Lord, ver. 25. Thus dealt *Nehemiah* with the People, *Neh. 8. 10,* And so *Isa. 1. 11, 18.* After the digging, and laying bare the Roots, they laid on mending.

*Deut. 18. 15.*

*1 Sam. 12. 17, 18, 19, 20.*

*2 Sam. 12. 7, — 12.*

*Ver. 25. Neh. 8. 10. Isa. 1. 11, 18.*

As the Prophets, so likewise the Apostles have observed the same Method, as appears by that Text (before mentioned in the former Doctrine), *Act. 2. 36. Let the House of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord & Christ*: when the Apostle had thus discovered their Sin unto them, so that they were pricked in their hearts with that dagger; then he comes with *Repent, and be Baptized, every one of you, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of Sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you*.

*Act. 2. 36.*

*you*

Ver. 38,  
39, 40.  
Rom. 7.  
Rom. 8.

Heb. 6, 4, 9  
Heb. 10.  
29.

Reas.  
2 Cor. 2. 7.

1 Sam. I.  
17.  
Exod. 6. 9.

Dr. Sibbs  
Souls Con-  
sult. p. 472  
Use 1.

Jer. 23. 1, 2  
Exek. 34.  
234.

you, and to your Children &c. ver. 38, 39, 40. There was the *dunging* of them: So St. Paul in his Epistles, as *Rom. 7.* there he *digged*, and *Chap. 8.* He layed on *dung* to enrich them. And such was his dealing with the *Corinthians*; his first Epistle to them, is spent in *digging*, but his second, in *dunging* and *mending*: Many other texts might be produced, as *Heb. 6. 4.* compared with *ver. 9. Heb. 10. 39. &c.* The Ground or Reason of this, is

Sorrow is a *Gulf*, as the Apostle sheweth, *2 Cor. 2. 7.* and swallowes up for want of Comfort, as it did *Cain, Esau, Judas, &c.* whose sorrows, not being asswaged with some hope, disposed them to desperation: Yea, the Godly themselves may be swallowed up with too much heaviness, as was *Hannah, 1 Sam. 1. 17.* and the *Israelites, Exod. 6. 9.* Some Godly men, thinking they could never be humbled low enough for sin, have desired to see their sins in the most ugly shape and colour, and God hath therein heard them; but to their cost (saith a Reverend Divine).

Such then, as are deficient, and wanting, in this part of their Ministerial Office, deserve Reproof; and are worthily reprov'd, in the Prophets, and by the Prophets: As *Jer. 23. 1, 2. Exek. 34. 2, 4.* Indeed the Minister must *break*, but he must *bind* again; *wound*, but he must *heal* again; *cast down*, but he must *raise up* again: They may not alwaies be renting and tearing the hearts of their People, with terrors and threatnings; nor take pleasure and delight in Cutting and launcing, in wounding and afflicting of the poor Conscience, but reveal withal those mercies which belong unto the Penitent. Thunder without Rain (we say) is a sign of much wind: To be alwaies thundering down of Judgments, and never showre down Mercies, gives too just occasion to them who watch for advantages, that the Ministry is evill spoken of; and traduced for a *Legall* and *windy Ministry*.

What would we think of such a Chirurgion, that doth onely cut and launce men's soars, and never bind them up? that onely applyeth Corrosives, but no Lenitives? Would we not think him to be rather a *Butcher* than a *Chirurgion*? The like may we think of that Minister, that doth onely beat down men with the



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the *Terrours of the Law*; and being cast down thereby, labour not to raise them up again, and revive them, with the *Comforts of the Gospel*. Surely such may be esteemed Hangmen and Executioners, rather than Ministers.

We are *Spiritual Persons*; so called, in a different and singular respect from other men; as appears, 1 Cor. 14. 37. (where the *Prophet* and *Spiritual man* is made all one,) but if we be wanting in this duty of refreshing and reviving the sad and dejected Spirits of our Hearers, Where is that Spirit we have our denomination from? The Spirit is the *Comforter*; but when we say nothing, to the comfort of those that are distressed in Conscience, we may well ask (as *Elisha* did, when he struck the Waters of *Jordan* with *Elijah's* Cloak,) *Where is the Spirit of God?* Where is the *Comforter*? who, in all that proceeding with the World, in reproofing and convincing it of Sin, (mentioned. *Joh. 16. 8, 9, 10, 11.*) yet never dejects the nature of a *Comforter*: In that capacity he is sent, and in that he comes and works.

The Times indeed are such, and the Age so prophane and loose; that most Congregations stand in more need of a *Bea-nerge* than a *Barnabas*; the Spirit of *James* and *John*, the *Sons of Thunder*, is fitter for them than the *Sons of Consolation*. The *Fat*, of the strong amongst God's Sheep, are to be fed with *Judgment*, *Ezek. 34. 16.* Notwithstanding, there are those (albeit they are the least part of those) that hear us, that mourn in *Zion*, and tremble at the Word, and are indeed cast down under a sight and sense of their Sins and Failings; and to these few, that are of a broken and tender heart, we are bound to have most respect, in our Ministry. Say there be but one, or two, in a Congregation, that stand in need of Comfort; yet, it is better, that all the rest should go away without that Portion which belongs unto them, than that those one or two, who are of a dejected Spirit, should go away without theirs. The first and chiefest Charge that Christ gave to *Peter*, concerned his *Lambs* (the weakest and tenderest of the Flock); *If thou lovest me, feed my Lambs*, *John 21. 15.*

1 Cor. 14.  
37i

Joh. 16.  
8, — 12.

Act. 4. 36.

Ezek. 34.  
16.

Joh. 21. 15

But, for asmuch as our Congregations are mixt of good and bad, care must be taken, and had, by us that are Ministers of the Gospel, in our Ministerial Office, that we neither Preach the Law without the Gospel, nor the Gospel without the Law; both must be preached, and that in the right order: To preach the Law alone by it self, is to pervert the use of it; neither have we any Power or Commission so to do: (for Power is given us for the *Edification*, not *Destruction* of the Hearer). It was published as an Appendant to the Gospel, and so it must be preached; It was published *in the Hand of a Mediator*, and in the Hand of a Mediator it must be taught and delivered, that thereby no man might be exasperated, but put in mind of the Sanctuary, whereunto they must fly: And, as it is a Rule in Physick, still to maintain Nature; Insomuch, that when that shall be in danger to be destroyed, the wise Physitian leaves giving of purging Physick, and gives Cordials: So should God's Ministers, the Physitians of Souls, deal with their Patients; Albeit with the purging Physick of the Law, they bring the spirits of men very low, yet they must with great care uphold and maintain the spirits, so as that they do not sayl, or be extinguisht, but, with the Comforts of the Gospel be upheld, and revived.

That passage which we have *Acts 8.* may be made good use of by us: *Simon Magnus* having offered to buy the gifts of the Holy Ghost with money, gave just occasion to *Peter* to denounce that heavy Sentence against him; *Thy money perish with thee, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God,* verse 20. 21. Yet he affords him a little Comfort to uphold Nature (as it were), but very warily administered; Yet, *go and pray; perhaps, (or it may be) the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee,* verse 22. With good words, we ought to stay the hearts of the most desperate, and endeavour to win the frowardest (if it be possible); If we do not thus, we shall prove our selves to be *Physitians of no value,* *Job 13. 4.*

Wherefore, let us that are Ministers apply our selves to this Comforting part of our Office: It should be a great part of our study to be able to *speak a word in season to those that are weary*; we should study Arguments of Comfort, and be ready to administer them, as need shall require. And



And let us remember, that as God himself will not *alwayes* be *Chiding*, neither keepeth He his anger for ever (as the Psalmist speaketh, *Psal. 103. 9.*): No more must the Minister of God be alwayes reproving, but must do as those, who give their Children wormwood, or some bitter portion; they sweeten the brim of the Cup with Honey, or mix their *Aloes* with Milk, and then give Sugar to sweeten their mouths again. *There shall not come from me* (saith God) *a double tribulation*; Take we heed that there comes not so from us, If we add affliction to these whom God hath wounded, we give them *Gall for Meate, and Vinegar to quench their thirst*. Let us reveal those merices which the Word affords, and offers even to the worst: mild Lenitives may be as profitable to some, as biting Corrosives; However, let us with *David* sing both of *Mercy* and of *Judgment*, *Psal. 101. 1.* The heart of man is broken as a flint, with hard and soft together; A *Hammer* and a *Pillow* doth it; a *Prison*, and a *Pardon*; a *Curse*, and a *Saviour*, is the onely way to reclaim and bring home an Offender.

*Psal. 103. 9.*

*Psal. 69. 24, 26, 27.*

*Psal. 101. 1*

*Use 3.*

A word or two by way of *Direction*, I have for you (before I part with this Poynt); For if the Dressers Office be to *Dug* as well as *Digg*, then if you want Comfort, or are dejected in Spirit by reason of your sins, you may be directed from hence what to do, and whom to make use of, in that your perplexed condition: God's People should make use of God's Ministers, not onely in Publique, but in private also, and have their advice and counsel for resolving doubts of conscience, (if need so require) God himself hath directed us unto this course: *Ask now the Priests* (saith the Lord of Hosts, *Hag. 2. 11.*) And *Mal. 2. 7.* *The Priests lips should preserve Knowledge, and they* (that is the People) *should seek the Law at his mouth*: God hath furnished His Servants the Ministers with gifts and abilities (to this purpose, *Isa. 50. 4.*) And they have received a special Commission from God, and promise likewise, that they shall yield comfort to his People in such a Case, *2 Cor. 5. 19. John 20. 23.* Nor may we think that the word of any private man shall be so efficacious for settling the conscience in solid Peace, as the word of a Faithful Minister shall be. *David* could not have so much Comfort from the mouth of all his Courtiers about him, as

*Hag. 2. 11. Mal. 2. 7.*

*Isa. 50. 4.*

*2 Cor. 5. 19. Joh. 20. 23*

he had from the mouth of *Nahan*, telling him that *his sin was forgiven him*.

And this course have the godly still taken: So *Josiah* being in a perplexity upon the finding of the Book of the Law, considering that he had bin so grossly transgressed, sends for advice to *Huldah* the Prophetess, 2 King. 22. *Hezekiah* sendeth to *Isaiah* in the time of his trouble, 2 King. 19. *David* to *Abiathar*, 1 Sam. 23. 9. *John Baptist's* Hearers unto him, Math. 3. 6. And those, who were much perplexed upon the hearing of *Peter's* Sermon, come to him and the rest of the Apostles for direction and satisfaction; saying, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* Acts 2. 37. This (you have heard) is a special part of their Office, to Dug as well as Digg; nor will those that are Faithfull be wanting in it, in due time and order. And thus much of what the Dresser promised should be done on his part, if the Tree might one year more be spared; It follows, that we take notice of what is expected should be performed on the part of the Figg-Tree.

*And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

*Καὶ εἰ ποιεῖ καρπὸν, & si quidem fecerit fructum.* It is, *Oratio defectiva*, saith *Euthymius*, a speech somewhat imperfect, for [Well] is not in the Original. [And if it bear Fruit] what then? why then (it is to be conceived) all will be well.

I adore, saith *Tertullian*, the fulnesse of the Scriptures, speaking of their perfection; and, in another sense, we may say that the deficiencies, and seeming vacuities in Scripture are to be adored, and kissed (as *Constantine* kissed the empty holes where *Paphnutius's* eyes were pulled out): for, the omission of something is many times more significant then the supply (if the Speech had bin filled up) would have bin; As where the room left for words is anticipated by passion, and filled up with sighs and groans: Such an imperfect Speech was that, which *Moses* used to God in the behalf of *Israel*, *Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin, and if not, &c.* Exod. 32. 32. Such Speeches are often used in Scripture through passion of mind, which cause h the tongue like a cracked Pipe or broken Bell, to give a harsh and uncertain sound, as did the Dresser in my Text; Who seems to fault in the

2 King. 22.

14.

2 King. 19.

2.

1 Sam. 23.

9.

Math 3. 6.

Act, 2. 37.

*Text.*

Verse 9.

*Tertul. ad-*

*vers. Her-*

*mog. c. 22.*

Exod. 32.

32.



the midst of a Period ; but, the more imperfect his Speech is, the more perfectly it expresseth his Passion and Affection to the Figg-Tree ; he layd the condition of it to his heart, and was exceedingly filled with grief and sorrow, in the behalf of it, which swallowed up words : And that affoordeth us this Observation,

*A Faithful Minister cannot but be deeply affected with grief, in the behalf of such as remain unfruitful under his Ministerial labours.*

*Dost.*

Thus *Isaiah* having exhorted *Moab* to yield obedience to God, and submit to the Government of Christ, (*Isa. 16. 3.*) refusing through the pride of her heart to do it, the Prophet bitterly bewails her condition, *vers. 9. 11.* The like he doth for other Countreys, to whom he Prophesied, but especially for *Jerusalem*, *Look away from me*, saith he, *I will weep bitterly ; labour not to comfort me, because of the spoyling of the Daughter of my People*, *Isa. 22. 4.* As if he should have said, *extremity of sorrow* befits not the face of Prophet ; yet I am full and must weep, and take up a bitter lamentation for *Jerusalem's* distresse ; Therefore look not upon me, whilst I give my sorrow vent at my eyes. And thus was *Jeremiah* affected with the Churches miseries, as appears, *Jer. 4. 19, & 9. 1.* *St. Paul* had great grief for the rejection of the Jews, *Rom. 9. 2.* His pains and sorrows were like the pains of a Woman in travail (for so much the word expresseth) : It was a sharp and dangerous sorrow, as coming from the heart, and being in the heart ; and lastly, it was not for a brunt, as the pains in travail, but *continual*, and without intermission. And such was the affection which our blessed Saviour bore towards *Jerusalem*, *Luke 19. 41.* when He beheld it, and considered the miseries that were likely very shortly to fall upon it, He breaks out into a Passion ; First, shedding tears, for when He beheld, He wept over it ; then speaking sobbs, *If thou hadst known*, there is one sobb, and there he pawseth ; *Even thou*—there is another, *At least in this thy Day*—there he stops again ; *The things that belong to thy Peace*—again a stop. At last, another sobb comes out, *But now they are hidden from thy eyes.* If words be nothing else but the expression of our thoughts, then, of necessity, those must needs be the best words

*Isa. 16. 3.*

*Vers. 9. 11.*

*Isa. 22. 4.*

*Jer. 4. 19,  
& 9. 1.  
Rom. 9. 2.*

*Luke 19.  
41.*

which come nearest to the true expression of the heart. As that Picture is esteemed best, which cometh nearest to the life of that it represents, and not that which looketh with the smoothest countenance; So these broken Sentences, used by our Saviour, expresse to the very life that great sorrow, which he had for *Jerusalem's* misery, which would certainly befall it for contempt of the Gospel.

*Reas.*

A Faithful Pastor doth love his People, therefore cannot but grieve; for grief ariseth from the hurt, or danger of what we love; If we love not, we grieve not; but the more we love, the more we grieve. *David* loved *Absolom* exceedingly, and so grieved for him exceedingly. Other Reasons I might render, but mind not to insist upon this point: yet a word or two of Use, before I dismiss it.

*Use 1.*

Let such as are faithful put on the like affection; every good Christian should be grieved for the afflictions and miseries of their Brethren, much more should God's Ministers: All the measures of God's Sanctuary were double to the common. As the measure of our knowledge is (at least ought to be) greater, then that of others; so should the measure of our grief and sorrow for the distresses of God's Church exceed the grief of others. Had we that zeal for God's glory that love and affection towards our People, which we ought to have, it would out; it could not be otherwise: *How can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my People (sayd Esther), or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?* How can we endure to see that Tree which we have spent so much pains about, to be hewen down for Fewel? That Flock, that People, which we have so often studied for, prayed for, sweart for, preached unto; &c. to be rent and torn in pieces by Devils? *Hagar* could not endure to see the Death of her Child; can we endure to see the Death of ours without tears? Oh where (then) is that tender-heartedness that should be in us?

*Eth. 3. 6.*

*Gen. 21.  
16.*

*Use 2.*

And let me leave one word of *Exhortation* with you that are committed to our charge; make no longer sad the hearts and spirits of your Dressers. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with*

*Heb. 13.  
17.*



with grief, for that is unprofitable for you. Your Fruitfulness and Obedience doth make us to laugh with Sarah. For none with more comfort shall present themselves before the face of their Judge, then that Minister that can say, *Here am I, and the Children that thou hast given me*, Isa. 8, 18. But on the other side, when we behold our People to cast off the Regiment of Christ, to be led by the Devil and their own Lusts, to despise the means of Grace afforded, &c. this must needs make us sigh and weep, in regard of inevitable ruine and destruction that doth attend you: And in saddning our Spirits thus by your willful disobedience, you greatly wrong your selves: The lesse comfortable you are unto us, the lesse profit you will get by our Ministry. It is unprofitable for you, that we are grieved (saith the Apostle): we cannot discharge our Ministry so comfortably as we ought; Grief (you know) hinders much, if it overthrows not the work; we cannot study well, pray well, preach well, with grieved Spirits; wherefore, grieve us not, seeing it makes not for your profit. But we hasten to Particulars.

Gen. 21.6.

Isa. 8. 18.

*If it bear fruit, well: And if not, then after that shalt cut it down*].

Text.

This that concerns the Figg-Tree to be performed on its part, is layd down *Hypothetically*, and not so *Positively* as was that which the Dresser undertook for himself: *I shall digg about it and dung it* (said he): but in regard of the successe of his pains bestowed on the Figg-Tree, that was more contingent, and he speaks of it in a doubtful manner. *If it bear fruit, well; if not, &c.*

There are two parts or branches of this *Hypothetical Assertion*; First, *Affirmative*. *If it bear fruit, well*: Secondly, *Negative*. *If not, then after that thou shalt cut it down*.

In the *Affirmative* part, we have first a *Supposition expressed*. *It if bear fruit*, for that may be supposed, and it is very probable that it will; Secondly, A *Position or Determination* of the business; *implied*, [*Well*].

In the *Negative*, we have an *Addubitation or jealous suspicion* of it, *If not*: He feared the worst; Secondly, A *Resolution* to give way to the stroke of Justice, *Then after that thou shalt cut it down*.

If

*If it bear fruit, well].*

Gal. 4.8.

1 Joh. 2.1.

Math. 16.  
26.

[*If*] is commonly spoken of things questionable, yet not alwayes; For sometimes it is sayd of things *impossible*, as, Gal. 4.8. *If an Angel from Heaven*, &c. Sometimes things *indubitable* and *certain* are propounded and exprest with an *If*, as, 1 John 2.1. *If any man sin*, without doubt, all do: Sometimes, of things *improbable*, if not *impossible*, as, Math. 16. 26. *If he shall gain the whole World*, a thing very unlikely: But here it is spoken *Doubtfully*, yet supposing a *Possibility*.

*If it bear fruit, well.*

*Suppositio nihil ponit in esse*, He comes with an *If*, and doth not absolutely conclude it; yet he hopes the best: It is possible it may be so, and probably it will be so; after his farther pains taken with it, and God's patience in for bearing it, it may bear fruit. So then,

Doct.

*Where the Dresser's diligence accompanies the Owner's Patience, there is hope even of the most barren Figg-Tree.*

Such as have lived a long time unprofitably and unfruitfully, are not hopelesse, so long as God is patient, and the Minister diligent in doing of his Duty. *Three years* this Figg-Tree had stood in the Vineyard, and no shew, nor sign, of Fruit in all that time, yet the *fourth year* there is some hope, if God would be pleased to let it stand, and the Dresser take pains in Husbanding of it, (else to what purpose did the Dresser make Intercession for it)?

Acts 4.4.

Luke 19.  
48, & 21,  
38.

Many of those *Jews*, who heard Christ preach frequently, and saw the Miracles which he wrought; yet continue barren all the time, the whole *three years* of Christ's Ministration: yet their case was not desperate, for the *fourth year*, through God's patience and the Apostles diligence, many of them were converted: upon two Sermons that St. Peter preached *many of them that heard the word believed*, and the number of them was about five thousand, Acts 4.4. It cannot be imagined but that many of these (if not most) had heard the powerful Sermons of Christ many times before, which may be gathered by that we read, Luke 19.48, & 21.38. *All the People*, that is, great multitudes, (in a manner all) saith the Evangelist, *came to the Temple to hear him, and were very attentive.*



St. Paul had long lived a Pharisee, before his Calling; all which time, he was not without the means; for he had heard St. Stephen disputing against the *Libertines* and *Cyrenians*, Acts 6. 9. and that excellent Sermon which he preached Chap. 7. he was present at, as appears by that we read, ver. 58. and yet he remained still a Pharisee, and a bloody Persecutor of the Church, Act. 8. 1, 3. Yet, after this, he was deeply humbled, and converted; and, of a *persecuting Saul*, became a *preaching Paul*, and was so richly loaden with the fruits of Holiness, as that he came not behind the best and fruitfullest Figg-Tree in the Vineyard of the Lord. And that Parable which we have Mat. 20. 6. may make for the Confirmation of the Poynt delivered; At the *eleventh hour* of the day, some were found standing idle in the Market, and were called as well as others at the third, the sixth, and 9th hour.

There is a saying, *Nullum Tempus occurrit Regi*, no time excludes the King's Plea: It is true in this Case, Preachers must call at all times; God calls at any time; No time can be prescribed against him. *The Wind bloweth where it listeth; Such is the Work of the Spirit*, John 3. 8. Conversion depends wholly upon God's good Will and Pleasure; *Of his own Will he begets us by the Word of Truth*, James 1. 18. The Word is the Instrument of our Regeneration, not (*Physicall* but *Morall*,) as if the power to regenerate were included in the Word, read, or preached; as vertue to heal, is in a Medicine; (therefore all are not regenerated, that are partakers of the means). But it is a *Morall Instrument*; for it pleaseth God to use it in this Work, and to joyn the powerful working of his Spirit with it, (as in the next Poynt shall be more fully declared). And it is a good sign that God hath some to call, and bring home to himself, in that place that he giveth, or continueth, the means unto, Acts 18. 9, 13. But, that it may appear that the Blessing is from him, he is pleased to take his own time, for making the means effectuell: Should all God's Elect profit by the means so soon as ever they enjoy them, the Glory of the Work would either be ascribed to the means, or to some good inclination that is in our selves, and not unto the Lord.

Act. 6. 9.  
& 7. 58.  
Act. 8. 1, 3.

Mat. 20. 6.

Reas.

Joh. 3. 8.

Jam. 1. 18.

Act. 18. 9,  
10.

Use 1.

From hence, we that are Dressers in God's Vineyard may receive great encouragement to hold on in our Ministerial labours; albeit we see little good wrought in our People for the present; we digg and dung one year, yea the second year, yea the third; but those Trees we take pains withal, receive no mending: They thrust away Grace and Mercy offered (as it were, with both hands), will not be reclaimed from their sinful courses; yet may we not judge their Case desperate, or conceive them to be past hope. *Augustine* speaks excellently to this purpose, *Noli dicere*, Do not say, What, will God ever mend such a man, so wicked, so perverse? *Noli desperare*, Do not despaire; look to Him to whom thou prayest; thou seest the greatnesse of the Disease, thou seest not the power of the Physitian; still let us go on with our work, and follow that diligently. *In all labour* (saith *Solomon*) *there is profit*, Prov. 14. 23. It is a Plant that will prosper in any soyle, a Seed that takes in any ground; for God hath given labour (and our Labour more especially,) this Blessing, to *increase and multiply*: Our labour in the work of the Ministry shall not be lost; a Blessing, first, or last, will certainly attend it.

Aug. in  
Esal. 55.

Pro. 14. 23

This, the Sons of that Husbandman found true, who being told by their Father, lying on his death-bed, that he had left store of Gold buried under ground in his Vineyard, fell (after his death) to digging & delving about the Vines, in hope to find out the Treasure; and albeit they found not what they looked for, yet by stirring the Earth about the Roots of the Vines, they gained a great Vintage that year, beyond expectation: Thus it falls out in the labours and travels of our Calling. Albeit (alwaies) we meet not with that profit which we expect; yet, by our constant pains and diligence, we shall so manure the hearts of some of our hearers, as that in the end we shall find a fruitful Crop to our endlesse comfort, both in the Salvation of their and our own Souls. *In so doing, thou shalt both save thy self and them that hear thee*, 1 Tim. 4. 16.

1 Tim. 4.  
16.

Eccles. 11. 6.

Wherefore, Harken we to the Counsel that *Solomon* gives, *In the Morning sow thy Seed, and in the Evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether both shall be alike good*, Eccles. 11. 6. Preach we in our  
you no



young Age, preach in old; we know not in what Age of our life we shall do most good, nor which is the Sermon that God will make most profitable to them that hear us. Put we on the Resolution of *Chrysostome*: Albeit I am not ignorant (saith he) that I speak in vain; yet I will not give over, for in so doing, I shall be excused before God; albeit no body will hear me. Instruct the worst still with meeknesse, *proving if at any time God will give them Repentance*. Let us do our duty, and then say as *Joab*, 2 Sam. 10. 12. *The Lord do what seemeth him good.*

Nor let any Private Christian despaire of any other, in regard of their *Non-proficiency*; living a long time under very profitable and powerful means; so long as God is pleased to spare, and continue the means, so long there is hope: It was not at the first hour, nor the third, nor sixth, nor ninth hour of the day, that all were called; some staid till the eleventh, and yet they received their Penny: It was not the first crowing of the Cock, no nor the second, that did awaken *Peter*; the third crowing of the Cock did it. Questionlesse, many more heard *St. Peter*, when he preached that powerfull Sermon, *Acts* 2. than were converted by it; divers of them (undoubtedly) went away for that time unwrought upon, which were upon his second Sermon converted; for it cannot be thought, that none of those two thousand which were added to the Church, *Act* 4. 4. were of the number of those who had heard *St. Peter* preach the former Sermon; whereat three thousand had been converted. None so wretched, so unprofitable, so sinfull, but, having the means continued unto them, may be effectually wrought upon, so as to become fruitfull in the end. Behold this Figg-Tree, that this Dresser had some hopes of; It was a *barren Figg-Tree*, A *sentenced Figg-Tree*, a Figg-Tree already doomed to the fire; yet upon the sparing of it, and farther pains taken with it, there is some hope, that it will become fruitfull, and then all *will be well*. Wherefore, passe not a sinall sentence upon any, in respect of their present condition; for albeit we may say that the estate of such a one as hath lived long under the powerfull means of Grace barrenly and unprofitably, is very dangerous for the present; yet no man can certainly conclude, or peremptorily say,

*Chrys. in Joh. 3.*

2 Sam. 10. 12.

*Use 2.*

Mat. 20.

Act. 2.

Act. 4. 4.

2 Chron.  
25.6.

Cambd.  
Brit. in  
Northum-  
berland.

as the Prophet did unto *Amaziah*, *I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast not hearkned to my Counsel,* 2 Chron. 25.6.

We read of the over-officious Friends of *Scotus* (that great Schoolman) who coming to visit him, and finding him fallen into an *Apoplexy*, buried him before he was dead: And we blame those who make such haste of burying their Friends, that they suffer them not to be thoroughly cold, before they put them in the Grave: Deal not you so cruelly with your Friends, Children, &c. Count not them Reprobates, nor Cast-aways, in whom you perceive no life of Grace at present; Although the leaves and boughes seem dead, yet there may be life in the Root albeir thou discernest it not. There are many that profess great skill in spiritual *Palmestry*, and upon very small experience, they can see the *Life-line* in the hands of mens Souls, and tell you strait, whether they be *Elect* or *Reprobate*; but they (for all their professed Skill) may mistake the hands of *Esaie* for the hands of *Jacob*. Let it be your care to see, that those you wish well unto, attend unto the means, whilst God affords them. *Cornelius* gathered his whole Household together, with his Kinsmen, and special Friends, whom he wished well unto, that they might hear *Peter* preach, *Acts* 10. 24. So, bring thy Friends, Children, Servants, (and them, whose good and welfare thou wishest and desirest,) to be digged about, and dunged, by the Dressers of God's Vineyard, and hope the best; Take it for a good *Omen* for a good Sign, if they be tractable this way, and do still attend to the Word albeir as yet they have no good wrought in them thereby. Thus *John* the Baptist, when he saw the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces* come to his Ministry, although he knew them to be a Generation of Vipers, yet he notes this for a good Sign in them, A Sign that some body had warned them, and that they were willing, to fly from the wrath to come, *Math.* 3. 7.

Mat. 3.7.

Use 3.

But yet, let not any presume (upon the Doctrine delivered) to continue still barren, under the means of Grace, upon hopes, that hereafter they may become fruitful Christians; for there is an *If* in it, and it is very Questionable, whether it will ever be: It is a well-grounded Observation of a grave and judicious Divine,



vine, that the Lord hath been wont, when he hath given the means of Grace unto a People, to make them effectual to those he means to save, within a very short time after they first enjoyed them; and he instanteth in *Cornelius*, and those that were assembled with him to hear *Peter*: Even whilst he was preaching unto them, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, *Act, 10. 44*. And in the *Philippians*, who, from the first day that *St. Paul* preached the Gospel amongst them, received it, and joyned together in fellowship with the Saints, *Phil. 1. 5*. The like in the *Galathians*, amongst whom his Ministry was successfull, upon his first coming unto them, *Gal. 4. 13, 14, 15*. And amongst the *Thessalonians*, his very entrance unto them was not in vain, but God is blessed his labours, that they proved very powerfull to their Conversion, *1 Thes. 1. 9. & 2. 1*. The Word, preached in any place, doth usually work best at first: And such Ministers as God hath made most fruitfull in their Ministry, have found it experimentally true, that God hath converted more to himself, by their labours, upon their first coming amongst a People, than afterwards; and that their labours afterwards have served, rather to confirm and build up, than to convert and turn to God.

Secondly, It would be remembred, that to whom God hath given the means of Grace, and they long enjoyed them, but are never the better for them (but the worse rather), albeit others have got much good, and profited thereby; To such it is a fearful Sign of *Induration*, and future Destruction, as these Texts evidence, *Prov. 1. 24, 28. 1 Sam. 3. 16. 1 Chron. 25. 6. Jer. 6. 28, 30. Ezek. 24. 13. Mat. 11. 25. Mark 11. 13, 14. Joh. 8. 47. 2 Cor. 4. 4. & 13. 5*.

Yet, thirdly, None may conclude from hence, that all such are Reprobates, and shall certainly perish, that have long enjoyed the means without profit: For albeit it may be said of such men, their estate is very dangerous for the present, and that if they dy in that estate, they carry with them to their Grave as fearfull a mark and note of Reprobation, as any we can find in the whole Book of God (saith my former Author); yet, while the Gospel is preached, and the means continued still, there is some hope that some good may be wrought in them at the last.

Hilderf. on  
Joh. 4. ver.  
41. Lett.  
70.

Act. 10. 44

Phil. 1. 5.  
Gal. 4. 13,  
14. 15.

1 Thes. 1. 9.  
& 2. 1.

Mr. Hilderf.

John 5. 3.

Wherefore, If any of you have lived long under the means, and yet got no good thereby, despaire not of your selves (and yet presume not). Attend still upon the means, repaire to God's Houle, hear the Word, (for if that convert thee not, What hope canst thou have, that any thing else will?) Do as those poor impotent Persons did, *Joh. 5. 3.* come to the Pool, and there lay waiting for the moving of the Waters, (although it be 38 years, yea longer;) use the means, and wait the good hour, never was any so unfruitfull and unprofitable, but if he would submit himself to the Dresser's Husbandry, call upon God for mercy, and hold out in his endeavours; God hath heard him in the end, and so at last all hath proved well, as followeth to be shewed you in the behalf of this Figg-Tree:

*Well]*

Albeit the words have a *suppositive Form*; yet they carry withall a *Positive Force*: If it bear Fruit, after thy Patience in bearing, and my pains in digging and dunging, What then? Why, then *all shall be well*. Therefore our Translators add that word (albeit it be not in the Originall), not with any Jesuiticall or Rhemisticall intention to darken or corrupt the Text, but to enlighten it; [*well*] being put in, like an Artificiall Tooth in the Mandible, to help the sound, which would not be so well without it; It makeh up the flaw or crack which (as before was shewed) is in the Sentence, and must necessarily be implied had it not been expressed: So then, this may be inferred,

*Doct.*

*All will be well if we bear fruit, though it be late first; Fruit-fulnesse at last, will make amends for all.*

B fore this, all is naught, stark naught, betwixt God and Us; but if, after God's long Patience, and the Dresser's diligence, we become fruitfull, and obedient; It will be well on all sides.

2 Chron.  
12. 2, 3.

We read 2 *Chron. 12. 2, 3.* of a great Army that came up against *Jerusalem*. because they had transgressed against the Lord, and despised his Messengers; the Prophet *Shemaiah* tells the Princes of *Israel* and *Judah*, that God would deliver them into the hands of their Enemies, because they had forsaken Him; Hereupon, the Princes of *Israel*, with their King, humbled them-

*selves.*



*selves before the Lord, and confessed his rightconnesse; thereupon God was pacified, his wrath was turned away; and then in Judah all things went well, (saith the Text, verse 12.). Frequently doth God call upon his People to be obedient, and to return unto their Duty upon this very ground, that it might be well with them, Deut. 12, 25, 26. Jer. 7. 23, & 22, 15, 16, & 38, 20. And this hath the testimony, even of the most rebellious, as we find, Jer. 42. 6. We will do what God requires, that it may be well with us.*

And needs it must be so, because, however the beginning was naught, and proceeding worse; yet the end is good, and all is well, that ends well.

There are many good Ends that meet in that one Center: The *Ultimate End* that God aims at in all his Actions, is the *glory of his Name*. Thus he Elected us from before the Foundation of the World, to the praise of his Glory, Ephes. 1. 5, 6, 12. He Created us to the same End, Prov. 16. 4. Isa. 43. 7. and Redeemed us for that purpose, 1 Cor. 6. 20. He preserves and feeds us, that his Glory may be set forth by us, &c. Rom. 11, 30. Now by our conversion, and turning unto him; by our bringing forth fruit, beseeeming Repentance, great glory redounds unto his name, John 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, his mercy is magnified*, 1 Tim. 1. 13, 16. *Power seen; Truth, Wisdom, Patience, Goodnesse*, all, exalted in the raising up Children to Abraham of stones, in healing old soares, raising up the Dead to life, &c. *All is well* (then) in respect of the Owner, *he hath his End*.

Secondly, In respect of the *Dresser of the Vineyard*, all will be well. Christ is the chief and principal Dresser, and he now sees the travail of his Soul, the effect of his Sufferings, the fruit of his Blood which was shed to purge us, to be a peculiar People unto himself, zealous of good Works. When he sees a Soul begotten to him, a Branch engrafted in him, he rests abundantly satisfied, and contented therewith, Isa. 53. 1. He counts his Blood well bestowed; And that blood which before spake Vengeance, now no more speaks such things against any such Soul, but mercy.

Verse 12.

Deut. 12.  
25, 26.

Jer. 7. 23,  
& 22, 15,  
16, & 38,  
20.

Jer. 42. 6.  
Reas.

Ephes. 1.  
5, 6, 12.  
Prov. 16. 4.  
Isa. 43. 7.  
1 Co. 6. 20.  
Rom. 11.  
30.

Joh. 15. 8.  
1 Tim. 1.  
13, 16.

Isa. 43. 17.

TIT. 1. 14.

In reference to the *Under-Dressers* God's Ministers, *all will be well*; Their pains in Digging, Dunging, Pruning, Preaching, Praying, Sweating; is well recompenced. Our Labour indeed is a soare sweating labour (as hath bin before shewed), when nothing but Sweat comes of our Labour: But when a Tree that is ready to dye, recovers it self upon the travail and pains of the Dresser; this makes for his credit and honour, and puts (as it were) a new life into him, and it will enable him to make a comfortable account to the Lord of the Vineyard, when he shall be called thereunto, of that wherewith he was entrusted. And that *is well* for him, *Dan. 12. 9.*

Dan. 12. 3.

Thirdly, Whereas before, the Ground was cumbered with a barren Tree (as before you heard), and other Trees hindered by it, &c. Now in bearing and bringing forth of Fruir, the Vineyard is credited, the Soyl much enriched, other Trees graced and revived. Great joy was in the Church upon Paul's Conversion and Preaching of the Gospel, which before he had persecuted, *Acts 9. 31.* and so for the Gentiles calling, *Acts 11. 18, & 15. 3.*

Acts 9. 31,  
& 11. 18,  
& 15. 3.

Lastly, It will *be well* for the Tree it self. Now upon it's fructifying, it is out of danger of felling and fying; The *Pruning hook*, may come to some of the Branches of it, to make it more fruitful; but the *Axe* shall never be layd to the Root: no Beast shall browze it, Canker eat into it, Danger come nigh it; It is under the Eye, and care of the Lord of the Vineyard; And that *is well* for him also. Thus you see, how the *Ends* of all these lines meet in this one Center, *Well*. All must needs be well, *that ends so well.*

Joh. 15. 2.

Use 1.

Let me now apply my self to you, who hitherto have lived an unfruitful and unprofitable life; Can you have a greater encouragement to well-doing then this, that notwithstanding your manifold provocations, yet God is reconcileable, and albeit heavy Judgments have bin denounced against you; yet, if now, you will amend your wicked lives, you may do well. Nothing (Beloved) keeps a poor sinner off from turning to God more then false fears: and nothing brings on more comfortably, then hope of mercy: false hope (indeed) bears it self up on false grounds, and doth no other then add to hardness and impenitency. But true Hope melts, and turns the hardest heart into softness.



ness. Take away Hope, and take away all endeavour; Nay, take away all Desire too, (as one truly saith) which is more; For what is out of a mans hope, he desires not, or very rarely. It is possible for him to waste and pine away in empty Vellonies, and imaginary wishes; but, Who will ever put forth his abilities or addresse his endeavours towards an impossible good? Many an old man may be heard to wish himself young again, yet, I think, never was any old man so besotted as to endeavour it. There is great difference betwixt vanishing wishes, and serious desires; True desires are active and industrious, and such addresse themselves to the prosecution of that onely, which they apprehend as feizable and probable: Now there is hope concerning this thing, that upon our Fruitfulness, *all will be well.* The Valley of Achor was given for a door of Hope to Israel, *Hos. 2. 15.* God hath given assurance to us, both in his Word, and by his Works, that all shall be well upon our Repentance and Amendment, *Ezek. 18. 21, 22.* And this unto us is a Door of hope, as the Valley of Achor; and the possession of these borders of the Land of Canaan, which God gave to Israel, was a Door of Hope, and Pledge to them, that they should enjoy the whole Land of promise: wherefore,

*Ezra. 10. 2*

*Hos. 2. 15.*

*Ezek. 18.  
21, 22.*

As the Angel of Heaven came to Hagar, so this Doctrine comes to thee, and wills thee not to fear, but to open thine eyes, and see saving relief near at hand, if now at last thou wilt reform thy life.

*Gen. 21. 17*

But I am a dry, and dead Tree; yea, twice dead, (albeit not yet plucked up by the Root)? and is there any hope that such a Tree should live, or ever be recovered?

*Object.*

Let not the Eunuch say, I am a dry Tree, saith God, *Isa. 56. 3, 4.* Let none say that is sensible of his own defects and unworthiness; Behold, I am not meet to receive grace from God: For thus saith the Lord to such Eunuchs, to such self-dejected Souls, who yet desire to be approved of Me, in doing what I require of them in simplicity and sincerity of heart; *Even to them will I give in my House, and within my Walls, a place and a name better than of Sons and Daughters;* that is, I will honour them in my Vineyard, the Church; take away their reproach, and supply them with those blessings, the want whereof they

*Resp.  
Isa. 56. 3,  
4, 5.  
Established*

they so much bewayl; and I will be gracious to them, above their desire and expectation. And hath not God made good his promise, in all Ages to others? why then shouldst thou be out of Hope?

What *People* more barren, and further gone (in all likelyhood) then the men of *Ephraim*, who willingly followed the Commandment of *Jeroboam*? Their Idolatrous and Wicked Governours were not so forward in Commanding, as *Ephraim* was in Obeying. And when God shewed them their sicknesse, and willed them to come to him, that he might cure them; then *Ephraim* went to *Ashur*, and sent unto *Jareb*, the King of *Assyria*; yet if there be a *Come and let us return*, then after two dayes they shall be revived, and the third day they shall live, *Hos. 6. 2.* Or what City so far gone as *Jerusalem*? She justified *Sodome* and *Samaria*, *Ezek. 16. 51.* and sinned so much, that *Sodome*, compared with Her, might seem righteous (saith *Augustine*); yet if She would return, all should be *Well*: God would then gather Her under the wings of mercy and protection, as the Hen gathereth her Chickens, *Math. 23. 37.*

What man so far gone as *Manasses*? did not he build Altars to strange gods, sacrifice his sons to *Moloch*; give himself to witchcraft and forcery, and cause the Streets of *Jerusalem* to run with innocent blood? yet, upon his Repentance, all was well; for when, in his tribulation, he prayed, and humbled himself greatly, the Lord heard him, and was entreated, and then he knew that the Lord he was God, *2 Chron. 33. 12, 13.*

A man could hardly run a more wicked race then the Thief upon the Crosse; he maintained his wantonnesse and ryot by Robbery and Murther; yet, coming to our blessed Saviour by Faith, repenting of his former wicked Life, he received not only Pardon, but a grant of Paradise, *Luke 23. 43.*

What a large room had the Devil taken up in *Marie's* heart? and how good entertainment (think you) found he, when he and six other unclean Spirits (as Inmates which he takes with him) there dwell, and lodge together? Yet she coming unto Christ, with shame and true sorrow (which she manifested by abundance of tears), seeking for mercy, she hath mercy shewed her, her sins forgiven her and all seven Devils together ejected, and cast out of her, *Mark 16. 6. Luke 8. 2.*

What

Hos. 5. 11.

Verse 13.  
Hos. 6. 2.  
Ezek. 16.  
51.  
Tantum  
peccavit ut  
ei Sodoma  
comparata  
justa vide-  
atur. Aug.  
Cont.  
Faust.  
Manich.  
Hæc. Lib.  
22. c. 61.  
Math. 23.  
37.  
2 Chron.  
33. 6.  
Ver. 12. 13

Luke 23.  
48.

Luke 8. 2.  
Mat. 16. 9.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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What shall we need to say more? Hear once for all, what God saith to this purpose; *Though a man have defiled his Neighbour's wife, oppressed, taken by violence, lift up his eyes to Idols, given to usury, &c.* yet if that man return from his wickedness all shall be well, for he shall save his own Soul alive, *Ezek. 18.17.* Let me say then to thee with *Austin*, O man that considerest the multitude of thy sins; why considerest thou not the Omnipotency of the Heavenly Physician? seeing that *God will because He is good, and can because He is Omnipotent.* He shuts the Gate of God's love against himself, who believes that either God cannot, or will not have mercy on him. If thou beest wicked, think on the Publican, saith *Chrysostome*; if unclean, consider the Harlot; if a Man-slayer, look on the Thief; Hast thou sinned? Repent. Hast thou sinned a thousand times? Repent a thousand times, hold up, and despaire not; *all shall be well*: Never shall Heaven Gates be kept shut, when any true Penitent knocks at them with the hand of Faith.

*Obj.* But, God may reserve Anger, upbraid me with my former barrenness; Though I may be suffered to stand yet not be regarded; If he forgive me, yet (it may be) he will not forget me.

*Resp.* Nay, all will be well in that respect too: Read *Jer. 31.18, 19, 20, 33, 34.* *Hos. 14.4.* He will not reserve Anger, but so forgive thy sins, as to remember them no more. Nor will he think the worse of thee for what thou hast bin: Was not *Paul* once a persecutor, a Blasphemer, breathing out nothing but threatnings, delighting in nothing more then in the blood of God's Saints and Children? yet being converted by a light from Heaven, God takes him near unto himself, appoints him to be a *chosen Vessel* to bear his Name, takes him up into the third Heavens, fills him with abundance of Revelations, (testimonies of favour to him above the rest): Call to mind what thou readst, *Luke 15.* of the Father's entertaining of his Prodigall son, upon his return home: No sooner had he any thoughts of returning, and set foot forward, but the Father runs to meet him, he kisseth and embraceth him, &c. He gives kisses, not stripes (saith *Chrysologus*); the force of love sees no faults. He so healeth his Sons wounds, as that he might not leave a scarr,

*Ez. 18.17.*  
O homo  
qui illam  
attendes  
peccatorum  
multitudi-  
nem, cur  
non atten-  
des Omni-  
potentiam  
Cœlestis  
Medici, &c?  
*Aug. de*  
*Temp. Ser.*  
58.  
Si impius  
es, cogita  
Publica-  
num; si im-  
mundus, at-  
tende Me-  
rettricem;  
Si Homici-  
da, prospice  
Latronem,  
&c. *Chryf.*  
*Hom. 2. in*  
*Psal. 50.*  
*Jer. 31.18,*  
*19, 20 &c.*  
*Mich. 7. 19*  
*Psal. 103.*  
*12, & 32,*  
*1, 2.*  
*Hos. 14. 4.*  
*Acts 9.1, 3.*  
*Acts 9. 15.*  
*2 Cor. 12.*  
*4, 7.*  
*Luke 15.*  
*22. &c.*  
*Peccanti*  
*glio dat*  
*Oscula non*  
*Flagella.*  
*Cl ryfol.*  
*Ser. 3.*

Joh. 3. 1.  
Dan. 4. 39.  
Joh. 21. 15

nor a freckle in his face. Remember *Mathew* the Publican, *Peter*, *Mary Magdalen*, with others; and how they have bin entertained, and you must be enforced to confesse that Christ did never shew so much kindnesse unto any, as to those who have fell fowlest, and bin most notorious Offenders, upon their Repentance. Nor did their former sins disable them from their Callings; *Jonah* upon his Repentance shall be restored to his Prophetical function: *Nebuchadnezzar* to his Kingdoms; *Peter* to his *Apostleship*, &c. Thus whatsoever thou doest within the compasse of thy Calling, shall be accepted, as if thou never hadst offended. *All will be well.*

Tell me now, what resolvest thou to do? wilt thou passe over what thou hast now heard, as slightly as thou hast passed over other Doctrines, and depart as fruitlesse from this Sermon, as thou hast done from many? If so, I might tell thee, it will not be well: Or if in case thou resolvest to amend, but art incouraged from what hath now bin delivered, to deferr and put off, because if it be done at last, *all will be well.* Then you must farther know, that if it be so, that will be all; It will be but *well*, your Writt will be returned, though not, *Non est inventus*, yet *Tardè venit*, and that will be uncomfortable; But it is to be feared, that if thou hardenest thy heart, to persist in evil, upon a presumptuous hope of repenting when thou pleasest (as hath bin before declared), thou wilt not find it *so well* in the end: And it will be one day unto thee a *Hell in Hell* to remember what God hath offered, and how near thou wert to Heaven, but didst thrust Salvation from thee, even with both hands (as it were). By how much the greater the mercy of God hath bin towards thee, which thou neglectest; by so much the soarer will vengeance be at the last.

Use 2.

Secondly, If, upon bearing fruit of Repentance and new Obedience, *All is well*, whatever was before; It may direct us in our Carriage and behaviour towards Converted-ones, such as have lived long in sin, yet reclaimed in the end. Think not the worse of them, for what they have bin, but judge of them as they are; Object not to *David* his *Adultery*, to *Manasses* his *Idolatry*, to *Peter* his *Apostacy*, to *Mathew* his *Extortion*, to *Mary Magdalen* her *unclean Life*; They have Repented, God hath



hath Forgiven and Forgotten; *All is now well.* Say thou no more; magnifie God for them; *think well, and speak well* of them: Thou sinnest in doing otherwise. A new Life, and a new Course, should not be disgraced with rehearsal of a mans old sins, 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7.

2 Cor. 2.  
7.

Lastly, It affordeth singular comfort to every true Penitent, seeing (whatever hath bin) now *All is well* betwixt God and Them; Christ and Them, Angels and Them, the Ordinances and Them, the Creatures and Them; yea, betwixt Them and Them-selves: Should the World, Flesh, Devil, accuse (as accusing they will be ever and anon) (for thy former vicious life, and tell thee how thou hast lived, how thou hast sinned, what thou hast bin; &c. Answer, It is true, thus it was, but it is now otherwise. Now *all is well.* *Eat thy meat with a chearful heart;* Go on comfortably in thy Calling, for God now accepteth of thy Labour. I shall conclude this poynt with Remembring you of the Contract made betwixt Jonathan and David, 1 Sam. 20. 20. If the Arrow fall on this side of thee, *all is well, &c.* So if this Admonition, this threatening be on this side; that thou turnest thy face to it to embrace it, *all is well*: but if this Arrow, this Admonition be beyond thee, if thou cast it at thy back, in a contempt or forgetfulness, thy case is *very ill*, as in the next place is to be shewed.

Use 3.

Eccles. 9. 7

2 Sam. 20.  
20.

*And if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

Text.

This is the Negative Branch of the Hypothetical Proposition; And therein we have; First, An Addubitation or Suspicion [If not]; Secondly, A Concession or Resolution. *After that thou shalt cut it down.*

[Et si minus, And if not.]

The Speech is Doubtful and Suspicious; He hath the Figg-Tree in some jealousy: notwithstanding another years pains with it and about it, yet it might continue as barren as it had bin the three years before; And yet he will try, what it will do. Hence we gather, That

*Barrenesse may be found under the best and powerfulllest means.*

Doct.

Noah preached to the old World full six score years, *all the while the Ark was a preparing*, yet with little profit, for they

Gen. 6. 3.

1 Pet. 3. 20.

continued disobedient, and are now in Prison for it, eight Souls onely were saved in that Deluge, 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20.

Deut. 29.  
2, — 5.

Hear what Moses speaks to Israel, *Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the Land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his Land. The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signes and those great Miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this Day,* Deut. 29. 2, — 5. Hear

Isa. 5. 4,  
— 8.

again what God did for his Jewish Vineyard, *He planted it in a very fruitful Hill, He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choysest Vine, He built a Tower in the midst thereof, and also made a Vine presse therein, &c. Nothing could be done more for it than was done. And what was the Success?* When He looked for Grapes, Behold, wild Grapes, Isa.

Rom. 11.  
2, 3:

5. 4, — 8. Wot you not (saith the Apostle), *what the Scripture saith of Elias, how he maketh Intercession to God against Israel; saying, Lord, they have killed thy Prophets, and Digged down thine Altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life also,* Rom.

1 King. 19.  
4.

11. 2, 3. *Eliab* was a famous Prophet, and had in account amongst the Jews, next to *Moses*, who had such Power with God as that they sayd of him, he could Bridle Heaven with his Tongue; yet this mighty and powerful Prophet could not with his preaching, prevail with that stubborn and rebellious People; but ten Tribes would revolt from God; *Jeroboam's* Idols were followed; God's Prophets murdered, His Altars (in despite of true Religion) demolished; and not one open Professor to be seen in his time; and his own life sought after; which to preserve and save, he is enforced to flye into the Wildernesse, as we read, 1 King. 19. 4. And considering the ill successe he had in the discharge of his Prophetical function, he sits under a *Juniper Tree* and complaines to God of the People's stubbornnesse and rebellion; wishing rather to dye, then to live to be so hardly used by such a People.

Revel. 1: 4.

The Prophet *Esay*, that incomparable Prophet, (to whose Elegancies (saith one) the rowlings of *Demosthenes* do no more answer, then the confused noyse of Waters in one age, to those sweet Voyce of Harps in another, mentioned in the Revelation), who was able to make the heart melt in the Body of the most obdurate



obdurate sinner, with his Oratory; yet, you may hear him complaining that he had *laboured in vain, and spent his strength for nought*, Isa. 49. 4. *His Report would not be believed*, Cap. 53. 1. And his Ministry (for the most part) was spent in making the hearts of his People *fat against the day of slaughter*, Chap. 6. 10.

*Jeremiah found no better fruit of his Labours; His Hearers refused to receive Instruction; They hardened their Faces like a Rock, and refused to return*, Jer. 5. 3,—6. *His Bellows were burnt, his Lungs consumed, but the Founder melted in vain, for the wicked were not plucked away*, Chap. 6. 29.

Hear once more, what complaint the Prophet *Micha* makes, *Wo is me, for I am* (saith he) *as when they have gathered the Summer fruits; as the Grape-gleanings of the Vintage; there is no Cluster to eat, my Soul desired the first ripe fruit*, Mich. 7. 1. as who would say, I can find so small comfort of my Labours, that it is with me, as with one, who after the Vintage is past, seeks for a Cluster of Grapes to eat, but can find none; So, after all my Preaching, my Soul desireth to find some godly man, which would have bin to me no lesse pleasing, then the first ripe Grape to the Palate; but there is none to be found.

But, Was it not better with the Ministers of the New Testament, then with those of the Old? If we examine the matter, we shall find it little or nothing amended; *John the Baptist* (who was indeed greater then any Prophet, and was for Spirit and Power a second *Elijah*), he had a multitude of followers, *Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the Regions round about Jordan* followed after him, *Math. 3. 5.* and yet few or none received his Testimony, *John 3. 32.* And what *Isaiah* foretold, *Isa. 53. 1.* the Servants of Christ (who were sent out by him to Preach the Gospel) found most true; so that they were put to the Application of that Exclamation, which the Prophet before them had made; *Lord, who hath believed our Report*, Rom. 10. 16. for all that *God sent, and his Servants preached, and the People heard, yet all obeyed not the Gospel*; Nay, the least part of all, so that it might be questioned *who did?* And yet we need not wonder that the Ministry of Christ's Servants under the Gospel sped no better; when Christ himself, the chief Doctor of the Church,

Isa. 49. 4,  
& 53. 1.

Isa. 6. 10.

Jer. 5. 3;  
—6.  
Cap. 6. 29.

Mich. 7. 1.

Math. 3. 5.

Joh. 3. 32.

Rom. 10.  
16.

Church,

Joh. 7. 46.  
Mat. 11. 20  
Luk. 19.  
41. 42.

Church (who *spake as never man spake*;) laments the hard-heart-  
ednesse of his Auditory, as we find he did (more then once),  
*Math. 11. 20. Luk. 19. 42, 43.* He had preached many Ser-  
mons unto them, and wrought many Miracles amongst them;  
but the most that heard the one, and saw the other, accounted his  
Preaching no other then *Sedition*, and his Miracles *conjuring*:  
But enough hath been said for the Proof of the Poynt; Now,  
let me give you some Reason for it.

Jer. 23. 29.  
Psal. 19. 7.  
Rom. 1. 16  
1 Cor. 4.  
15.  
Heb. 4. 12.

First, Means are but means; So called, for that they hold a  
middle place between the Causes *Efficient* and *Finall*; serving,  
the one for the furthering and obtaining of the other: Much  
indeed is ascribed to the Word, and other means of our Salvati-  
on, as *Jer. 23. 29. Psal. 19. 7. Rom. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 4. 15. Heb. 4.*  
*12.* but it may not be imagined, that these means have that vir-  
tue inherent in them, which proceeds from them, (as there is in  
the fire, to warm us; or in food, to nourish us; or in a medici-  
nable herb, to heal us; or in the Seed, to bring forth Fruit.)  
The Ministry of the Word is as a Tool, or voluntary Instrument,  
which God is pleased to use in the work of our Conversion, that  
can do nothing without the hand that moves it, the Spirit of  
God going along with it, (which is an Assistant to it, but not in-  
cluded in it) *Isa. 48. 17.* That *water of Jealousy* which we read  
of, had not that power of it self to distinguish betwixt the chaste  
and unchaste Wife; nor did the *Shadow* of St. *Peter*; nor the  
*Handkerchief* from St. *Paul's* body, differ from other mens sha-  
dows, nor from other Linnen of the same kind, but onely in that  
virtue of healing, which God for a time did give; so the pow-  
er of the means to convert and fructify, lyeth not in the excel-  
lency of the Teacher, nor in the Word it self; but in the Spirit  
of God onely, which worketh by these means: As in sowing  
Seed, be the Husbandman never so skilful, or laborious, the  
ground never so rich and fertile; yet it is *God that giveth to eve-*  
*ry Seed its own body, 1 Cor. 15. 38.* No Cropp can be without  
his blessing; *It is through God that the weapons of our warfare are*  
*mighy, 2 Cor. 10. 4.* What can *Elijah's* Cloak do if the *God of*  
*Elijah* be absent?

1 Cor. 15.  
38.  
Gen. 26. 12  
2 Cor. 10. 4  
2 King. 2.  
14.  
Reas. 2.

Secondly, It is not God's good Will and pleasure that the  
successe should ever be answerable to the means; for fear that we  
should



should ascribe too much to means, and too little to Him (which we are too apt to do). Hence it is, that he oftentimes makes choyce of weak means, to effect great matters; as when *Gideon* went against the *Midianites* with an Army of two and thirty thousand, God tells him, that the People were too many for him to give the *Midianites* into their hands, lest *Israel* vaunt themselves against him, saying, *Mine own hand hath saved me*, Judg. 7. 2. Thus, in taking of *Jericho*, it must be by the blast of Trumpets made of Rams-horn, *Josh. 6. 3. 5.* Divers Instances might be brought of this.

Judg. 7. 2.

Josh. 6. 3, 5.

And, as he maketh choyce of weak means, so he giveth many times the greatest Blessing to the weakest and unlikelyest means: *Twelve baskets full of fragments shall remain*, after the feeding of *five thousand*, with *five Loaves and two Fishes*, Mat. 14. 17, 21. And but seven Baskets full shall remain after the feeding of *four thousand* with *seven Loaves and more Fishes*, Mat. 15. 34. 37, 38. Where there was lesse Company, and more Food, there is the lesse remainder. *Joshua* could say to *Israel*, what *Moses* could not, *Cleave unto the Lord your God, as you have unto this day*, Josh. 23. 8. Under *Moses* Government, that People was a rebellious People, and forsook the Lord that made them, and had done much for them: and yet in *Joshua's* dayes (who was farr inferiour in gifts to *Moses*,) they were obedient; so that his Government was blessed above the Government of *Moses*. Nor do we read, that *Christ* ever converted so many by his three years Ministry, as *St. Peter* did by two Sermons Act. 4. 4. That preaching which is most con-emptible in the world, hath been usually found to be most profitable and successfull, 1 Cor. 1. 4.

Mat. 14.

17, 21.

Mat. 15.

34, 37, 38.

Josh. 23. 8.

Act. 2. 41.

& 4. 4.

1 Cor. 1. 4.

There is a Story which is pertinent to the businesse, 1 Sam. 30. 11. *David* in the pursuit of the *Amalekites*, where he had no kind of Intelligence, nor no ground to settle a conjecture upon, which way he must pursue them, (yet pursue them he must;) in the way, he finds a poor young fellow, a famished sick man, one that was derelicted of his Master, and left for dead in the march; and, by the means and conduct of this Wretch, *David* recovers the Enemy, recovers the Spoyle, and the Love of his People, and his own honour; So in the Ministry. And it

1 Sam. 30.

11.

2 Cor. 4. 7.

is God's good pleasure that it should be thus, that He may especially be looked unto, 2 Cor. 4. 7. So much weaknesse shall appear in the Instruments, as that their strength shall not be thought their own.

Reas. 3.

1 Cor. 6. 7.

Mat. 23.

37.

Joh. 5. 40.

Thirdly, There is *utterly a fault* amongst our selves, (as the Apostle speaks in another Case), *I would, saith Christ, and you would not*, Mat. 23. 37. *You will not come unto me that you might believe*, Joh. 5. 40. Man's wilfulnesse is a cause of his Unbelief and Barrennesse, under the means; And this we may affirm (without any danger of falling into Popery): For three things there are, that concur in a Sinner's Conversion; First, the *Word perswading*: Secondly, *God's Spirit prevailing*: Thirdly, the *Will of Man consenting*. Now, God works not upon us as upon stocks and stones, but as upon reasonable Creatures; and if we would be saved, we must co-work with God in the work of our Salvation: We must hear, read, confer, resort unto the Church, &c. and do what lyes in us, that the means may become profitable; For He that made us without our selves, will not save us without our selves. The Father begets a Child without the Will of the Child, (for then it was not, and it had none); But when the Child is born, he cannot bring it up to any Art or Science against his Will: So we are created without our selves, but not regenerated without our selves. Now, herein we are wanting; we do not what lyes in us, that the means may be profitable, we are wanting in our Attendance, Preparation, &c. we come not at all, or with prejudicate opinions when we do come; or else bring Malice, Guile, Hypocrisy, in our hearts, and regard not what is said: Were we not wanting to our selves in using of the means, God would not be wanting unto Us in blessing our endeavours; for, though we merit not from God in that we do, nor can challenge any thing from Him as due debt, for our best performance, yet God would not leave Himself without witness, did we our best endeavours to profit by the means.

Aug.

1 Pet. 2. 1, 2

Use 1.

Judg. 17.

19.

Wherefore, See that we rest not in the means, be they never so good or excellent: *I know the Lord will do me good* (said Micah), *seeing I have a Levite to my Priest*, Judg. 17. 19. As if that must of necessity follow; So say some, We have got amongst us



a learned man, a powerfull Preacher; now we shall profit and get good by such a man's Ministry. But *God seeth not as Man seeth*, (as God told *Samuel*,) who being sent to anoint one of the Sons of *Ishai* to be King, (without any more particular Instruction,) and *Eliab* being presented, *Surely* (said *Samuel*, noting the goodlinesse of his Person) *this is the Lord's anointed*. But *look not on his countenance, nor the height of his stature* (saith God), *for I have refused him*; and *David*, in appearance lesse likely to be chosen, was the man, *1 Sam. 16. 6*. It is indeed a mercy to enjoy the outward means of profiting; And the better and abler the means are, the greater ought the Blessing to be esteemed, (for ordinarily, in course of Nature, the best food yields best nourishment, and breeds best blood;) but yet we may not rest in this. There is a *Staff of Bread*, *Levit. 26. 25*. which is the *Word of God*, *Mat. 4. 4*. And so, the *Word* it self hath a *staff* too, which is *God's Spirit*; if that be wanting, no man living can live or profit by it. Be the Preacher never so excellent, or his gifts never so rare, were he *one of a thousand* (as *Job* speaks), or as *prompt a Scribe* in the Law as ever *Ezra* was; were his Learning never so profound, that he knew *all secrets*, and *all knowledge* which the World can afford; or were he as mighty and well-instructed in the Scriptures as ever was *Apollo*; be he that good Scribe, well taught unto the Kingdome of Heaven, able to bring forth of his Treasure, at all times, *things both new and old*; or be he endued with never so good dexterity in opening and dividing the word aright, like a good Workman that needeth not to be ashamed; yea, though he could speak with the tongue of men and Angels, and were instant in his labours, preaching both in season and out of season, upon occasions offered: Nay, if Christ himself should be again upon the Earth, and preach in our Temple every Sabbath day; should he heal the diseased; restore the blind to sight; cast out Devils; turn Water into Wine; feed thousands with a few Loaves and Fishes; work as many wonders in our sight and presence, as ever he did whilst he was upon the Earth; All this would be nothing; no good fruit could be expected without the operation of God's blessed Spirit. *Cain* heard God, *Judas* heard Christ, often: But what were these the better for what they heard?

*1 Sam. 16. 6.*

*Lev. 26. 25*  
*Mat. 4. 4.*

*Job 33. 23.*  
*Ezra. 7. 6.*  
*1 Cor. 13. 2*

*Act. 18. 24*

*Mat. 13. 25*

*2 Tim. 2. 15.*  
*1 Cor. 13. 1*  
*2 Tim. 4. 2.*  
*Nisi Deus interiori gratia mentem regat atq; agat, nihil prod est homini omnis predicatio veritalis:*  
*Aug. de Civ. Dei.*  
*1b. 15. c. 6.*

Pfal. 139.  
12, 16.

1 Cor. 4, 15

1 Cor. 1.

1 Cor. 3. 5.  
Nullus  
Doctor est  
Dator boni  
quod docu-  
rit. Bern.  
1 Pet. 5. 10.

Robins. &  
Essays Obs.  
25. p. 246.

It is in the Ministry of the Word, as it is in the Procreation of Children; though the natural means thereof be by ordinary Generation, yet all Man's endeavour is in vain, unlesse the Lord be pleased, by his Almighty power, to fashion us, and give us a form, and cover all our Members in our Mother's womb; and in that *Embrio* to infuse a Soul. And how often doth he deny Children to some of sound complexion, strong constitution; and giveth them to others, farr more unlikely: So, though the Ministers of the Word be our spiritual Fathers to beget us in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel, by the Seed, by which we are begotten; yet all the Fruit of our Ministry is his Gift; and he is pleased to make the Ministry of some one, of very weak parts and abilities, more availeable for this end (many times), than the pains and labours of men more deep and eminent. It is plain and simple preaching (as the World terms it,) that makes men *wise unto Salvation*: Not so much *Doctorly* preaching, as *Doctrinall* preaching, that converts Souls to God.

Let us beware (then) that we ascribe not that to the *Instrument*, which is onely proper to the *Efficient*; that to the Minister, which is onely due to the Lord. The Preacher is said to be the *Minister of Grace*, 1 Cor. 3. 5. but he is not said to be the *Giver of Grace*; We may be *Doctores Gratia*, but not *Datores*: That is a Prerogative which God hath reserved to Himself, 1 Pet. 5. 10. We are but as Instruments in the hand of God; it is he that striketh the stroke, and worketh the effect, making our Labours effectual in the hearts of our Hearers.

The means are to be used by us, but let them not be set above their place, nor beneath their place: To abuse the means, argues *Want of Wisdom*, or of Conscience. To neglect them, argues either *Desperatenesse* (as when a man is without hope of getting good by them), or *Presumption* (as when he expects good without them), or *Sloth* (when he will not trouble himself about them); with all which, *Unthankfulness* to the Lord is joyned, who provides them as helps against our Infirmities, but we will none: And to *contemn the means* which we have, so as to long and lust after such as we have not, argues *prophane simplicity*; As the Israelites did in the Wilderness, in loathing

*Manna,*



*Manua*, and lusting after Flesh; and the *Jews*, in despising Christ's Miracles upon Barth, and desiring to see a Sign from Heaven of him: And *Dives*, in desiring to send one from the dead, to reach his Brethren, when they had *Moses* and the *Prophets* with them; (All which is joyned with great Unthankfulness to God, who hath graciously provided the means to help our Infirmities). But to set the means *above their place*, and to trust to the means, is *Idolatry*, which is a Sin that provokes God more than either of the other: See therefore, that in the Use of the means, we be neither farther from them, nor nearer to them, than is sitting.

Mat. 16.

Secondly, Let this be for a *Caveat* or *Cautious* to us, that we judge not of a Minister's Calling or Faithfulness, by the success of his labours; Seeing (as you have heard), the Word may be sincerely taught, where it is unprofitably or unfruitfully received, 2 Cor. 4. 4. *Musculus*, in one place of his Comments, having said, that no places were more prophane and irreligious than those, where the Gospel was most abundantly preached; a *Jesuite* layes hold upon it, and presently cries, *Hi sunt Evangelici Doctores*, See the fruit of Gospel-preaching! Many are of his mind, who seeing so little fruit of Preaching in many places, cry out of the Gospel, and Ministers thereof: But God hath given his Prophets a Charge and Commission, to preach to that People whom he hath before hand told them would not hear them, Jer. 7. 27. Ezek. 2. 3, 4, 7. Nor is it their Case alone, but the Lot of the dearest of God's Servants (as before hath been shewed). It was observed of Mr. *Greenham* (a painful and zealous Preacher of the Gospel), that, albeit he were very industrious in his Calling, yet his People still remained ignorant; and that he had *Pastures green*, but *Sheep full Lean*, (as one saith of him).

Use 2.

2 Cor. 4. 4.

Contzen.

Jer. 7. 27.  
Ezek. 2. 3.  
4. 7.

Let us lay the blame where it should be laid, which is not ever in the Minister, but in the Unfitness and Indisposition of the Hearer. The Potion that was prepared for the cure of a Patient, may be so far from doing him good, as that it may hasten his end through his own Indisposedness, but then the Physician is not to be blamed for it: For (as it hath been said of old) three things there are, materially considerable in every cure; First the

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*Disease*: Secondly, The *Physitian*: Thirdly, The *Patient*. When any two of these joyn they have the Victory, the third cannot prevaile; If the *Physitian* and the *Disease* joyn, (as sometimes it happens that the cure is mistaken, and the very Medicine advanceth the Malady,) then down goes the *Patient*: If the *Patient* and the *Disease* joyn (which usually falls out), so that the *Patient* will not be ruled nor ordered, then down goes the *Physitian*; he is discredited, though he cannot help it. But if the *Physitian* and the *Patient* joyn; the one prescribing aright, and the other following his directions; down goes the *Disease*, the *Patient* recovers: *Sin* is the *Sickness of the Soul*, whereof every man is a *Patient*; *God* is the *Physitian*, who heals us by the hands of his Ministers; Now if the *Physitian*, for the *Patient's* forwardnesse and obstinacy, joyn with the *Disease*, justly punishing *Sin* with *Sin* (as he often doth), then the *Soul* is lost: If the *Patient* joyns with his *Disease*, The *Sinner* makes much of his *Sin*, and will not forgo it, nor follow the Rules prescribed for the mortifying and subduing of it; here the *Physitian* is discredited, not because the *Physitian* is unskillfull, but the *Patient* wilful: But if the *Physitian* and the *Patient* joyn; If *Christ* preach, and *Mary* repents; If *Christ* promiseth, and the *Sinner* believes, then our goes the *Disease*, though it were as strong as seven Devils; so that much lyes in the *Patient*. If we take our *Sin's* part, against *God* and his Word, we perish; If we take *God's* part against our *Sins*, we are saved. Thus, if the means prevail not, the defect is neither in *God*, nor in his Word, nor *Spirit*, nor Minister; but in those, who oppose and will not be reclaimed. That a man cannot write in Water, is not for want of skill in a Pen-man, but in the Unfitnessse and Indisposition of that Element: Lay the fault (then) where it should be layd; Thy heart is rotten (like a sear block), and will not endure the Engraver's or Carver's Tool. The *Spirit of God* may say, and *God's* Ministers may say, with the Apostle, 2 Cor. 6. 12. *Thou hast not been straitned in me, but thou hast been straitned in thy own bowels*; I have not been wanting unto thee, thou hast been wanting to thine own *Soul*: It is possible for a man to have a good Game dealt him, yet he may lose it by his own bad play, as many of you too well know.

2 Cor. 6. 12



But hath not God promised good successe to the Labours of his Servants; to give a blessing to his own Ordinance? Jer. 23. 22. *Had they stood in my Counsell, they should have turned the People from their evill way*: So 55. 9, 11. Besides, Christ hath promised his presence, and the Spirit's Assistance, to work with us in the faithful discharge of our Ministry, *Math.* 28. 20.

Object.

Jer. 23. 22.  
& 55. 9, 11.

Mat. 28.  
20.

Resp.

All this is true; and yet the Poynt delivered stands firm; For first, the Word preached shall never *return in vain*, but do that for which it was sent; but it is not alwaies sent to convert, but sometimes to harden, *Isa.* 6. 9. *Math.* 13. 14. The Gospel hath a double Savour with it, a *Savour of Life*, and a *Savour of Death*; A double Edge with it; it cuts both waies; it kills Corruption, or slayes the Soul: There is both *Thunder* and *Lightning* in it, it will break or blast: Like the beams of the Sun, it ripens that which hangs, but it withers that which falls; Wax it melts, Clay it hardens; and it is one and the same power that melts one, and hardens the other.

Isa. 6. 9.

Mat. 13.

14.

2 Cor. 2. 16

Heb. 4. 12.

Secondly, Albeit the labour and pains of faithfull Ministers may be unprofitable to some, yet not to all; onely to such as are lost, (as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 4. 4.) To them that are elected, it is profitable, (as *Acts* 13. 48.) and that one way or other. *Isay* his Ministry wrought nothing, in the Multitude, but blindness and obstinacy; yet, there was a *Tenth* that should return, *Isa.* 6. 13. And the like upon the Apostles Preaching; *All believe not*, *Rom.* 10. 16. yet *some did*, *Act.* 17. 4. & 13. 48. And thus Christ makes good his Promise, He will be with his to the end of the World; to blesse their labours to some or other, and one way or other; either for *Conversion*, or *Confirmation*, 1 Cor. 3. 6, 10. And whose Ministry is not, in one kind or other, effectual, may question their sending, or fidelity in dispensing.

2 Cor. 4. 4.

Act. 13. 48.

Isa. 6. 13.

Rom. 10.

16.

Act. 17. 4.

& 13. 48.

1 Cor. 3. 6,

10.

Use 3.

Let both Ministers and People be hence exhorted and perswaded, in using of the means, to seek to God for a Blessing upon the means; *I will hear the Heavens* (saith God), *and the Heavens shall hear the Earth, and the Earth* *Jer.* 23. 21. The Earth is the means to bring forth fruit to us, the Heavens to make the Earth fruitful by their Influences; but yet they must be Petitioners to

Hos. 2. 21.

God,

1 Cor. 3. 6.

God, before they can exercise that vertue God hath given them, for the helping of the Earth : So is it in this Case ; *Paul may plant, and Apollo may water, but it is onely God that must give the encrease*, for which he will be sought unto, both by Heaven and Earth, People and Pastor. It was not for nothing that Christ, being to send forth his Disciples, spent a whole Night in Prayer.

Luk. 6. 12.

*Luk. 6. 12.* It was for God's Blessing to go along with their Ministry, without which it could not be effectual to Conversion : As in saying, the hand must be to the Stern, and the eye to the Starr ; so in Preaching and in Hearing, use the means, but withall, look up to God for a Blessing on the means. Whatsoever step we set forward upon *Jacob's Ladder* (which condueth our Souls to blisse), still *Dominus super scalam* (as *St. Austin* speaks) remember, The Lord is above the Ladder ; above all means whatever ; let Him be sought unto. *If thou cryest after Knowledge* (saith *Solomon*) *and liftest up thy Voyce*, that is, prayest earnestly and heartily for Understanding, then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God, *Prov. 2. 3. 5.*

Gen. 28.

12, 13.

Aug. Serm.  
de Temp.

Pro. 2. 3, 5.

Use 4.

And for us that are Ministers ; If in case we see little Fruit of all our pains and labours, taken with a People, we should not be too much discouraged. *Melancthon*, when he was a young man, and being himself newly converted, thought it impossible for his Hearers to withstand the evidence of the Gospel ; but after he had been a Preacher awhile, (tis said of him, that) he complained, *Old Adam* was too hard for *Young Melancthon* : It is true, *Every one that sows, sows in hope* ; and he that plants plants in hope ; gladly would they eat of the labour of their hands, but if in case they do not ; yet they may not faint, nor give over their Calling : Let every faithfull Minister do his endeavour, and leave the success to God ; Not forgetting.

1 Cor. 9.

10.

First, That although we have *Virtutem vocis*, yet God reserves unto himself *Vocem virtutis* ; we may speak unto the Ear, but it is God that speaks unto the heart ; Teach we may, Give we cannot : If *Rachel* be barren, *Jacob* is not God to give her Children ; Where God hath shut up the Womb, and made barren, it is not in Man to make fruitfull.

Gen. 30. 2.

Secondly,



Secondly, There is *Cura Officii* and *Cura Eventus*, the former belongs to us, and not (so much) the latter; as that Parable shews, *Mark. 4. 26, 27.* Whether our People profit by us or not, we shall have our Fee; (As the Barber hath, who washeth a Black-more). *Though Israel be not gathered, yet we shall be glorious, Isa. 49. 4. and be a sweet Saviour unto God in them that perish,* (though our pains be not savoury unto them;) as well as unto them that are saved, *2 Cor. 2. 15.*

*Mark 4.  
26, 27.  
August.  
Isa. 49. 4.  
2 Cor. 2. 15*

Thirdly, Let what hath been delivered a little stay our hearts; It is not our case alone, but the case of God's best Servants; which of God's Prophets have not deplored the barrenness of their Ministry? It is some comfort, to have fellows in this misery.

And lastly, A word of *Comfort* to those that do profit by the means, and get some good by our Ministry: These have great cause to *fall down and worship* with that Convert, *1 Cor. 14. 25.* for you have heard, that it is not every ones portion; *Lord I thank thee* (saith our Saviour) *that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent of the world, and revealed them unto Babes,* *Mat. 11. 25.* Say so in thy own behalf; Lord, I bless thee for the means, but more for blessing the means to me; I bless God for that man, but more, for that I have got good by that man; I admire the gifts of the man, but more the gifts of thy Grace, wrought in me by the means of the man; glad I am that ever I heard him, but more glad that I have heard God speaking in him. Thus give God the Praise, who hath blessed the means unto thee; and take it as a pledge of God's everlasting Love, *Jer. 31. 3. Act. 13. 48.* The Resolution followes.

*Use 5.  
1 Cor. 24.  
25.  
Mat. 11. 27*

*Then after that, thou shalt cut it down.*

That is, after I have dunged it, and bestowed my pains about it, if then it remain barren and fruitless, I will speak no more for it, but shall give way to the stroak of Vengeance, and be ready to execute thy Command.

[*Then after that*], *eis τὸ μέλλον, in futurum*; The time is not definitely set down; he doth not say, so soon as the year is ended, nor immediately upon the expiration of that term of time, it shall be felled; but *after that*; no way hastening of the Execution.

*Jer. 31. 3.  
Act. 13. 48  
Text.*

The

The Lawyer hath a Rule, that Laws of Grace and Favour, are to be extended as large as may be; but odious Laws (as they speak) are to be straightned, and confined within the narrowest bounds of Interpretation; And it may be made good use of, in Divinity. These Articles and Conditions are drawn up by the Dresser, with all favour to the Figg-Tree, and may be expounded in the largest sense that they can bear. But being a Parable, we will not presse them too far: this onely we may note from hence,

Doct.

*The Dresser's of God's Vineyard should be inclined to Acts of Mercy, and not too forward in provoking God to Acts of Justice.*

To the Acts of Mercy we should importune him with strong prayers and cries; But, to the Acts of Justice, should we instigate and provoke him, Who were able to stand before him?

Jon. 3. 4, &  
4, 1.

This was *Jonah's* fault, he was very much grieved, that *Ninevie* should be spared; his reputation (he conceived) lay upon the destruction of it, for that he had spoken it definitely, in the name of the Lord; *Yet forty Dayes and Ninevie shall be destroyed*; and now that the City stood in Majesty, as before, untouched; and that the People therein were spared (forty Dayes being expired), he might be esteemed for no other, then a false and lying Prophet: This was that which vexed and grieved him; All this while he ran on a wrong ground, exacting overmuch the Rigour of the Letter, in his preaching; forgetting, that inclusively, this condition was to be understood; *Ninevie* should be destroyed, [unless they repented]: for this his preposterous zeal, God himself reproves him, and convinceth him of his rashnesse, by the smiting of the Gourd, which he took great delight in, and was much grieved for; *Thou hast had pity* (saith God) *on the Gourd, for the which thou hast neither laboured nor made it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I spare Ninevie that great City, wherein are six-score thousand Persons, that cannot discern betwixt their right hand and their left?* Jon. 4. 10, 11. As if he should have said, All these are better then that senselesse plant of the Earth; they are the work of my hands, and have cost me much time and regard,

Vers 7. 8.

Vers 10.  
11.



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gard, and such as require much time and leisure for their perfection; bethink thy self therefore, how just reason I have to be angry at thy unmercifulnesse, which art angry at my patience and forbearance?

And this was the fault of *James* and *John* in making that fiery motion to Christ against the *Samaritans*: Lord, wilt thou that we Command fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, as *Elias* did, Luke 9.54? As if they should have said, We have a Precedent for it, it is a Book case, *Elias* did so, let us do the like; these men deserve it, as well as those with whom he had to do, for this their base discourtesie, in not entertaining thee: Our Saviour sharply reproves them, for that their furious motion, *You know not* (saith he) *of what Spirit ye are*, verse 55. As if he should have said, You do not well consider from what spirit this so uncharitable a motion comes; It is not from the spirit of meeknesse (which would best become you), but from a fiery and furious Spirit, which thus transporteth you: *Elias* was a Minister of *Indignation*, you of *Consolation*; he had a *Legal* Spirit, you an *Evangelical*, The Spirit of the Law required *Severity*, the Spirit of the Gospel requires *meeknesse* and *Mercy*, and the Spirit of the Law Suites not with the lenity of the Gospel.

He gives the Reason, *for the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them*, verse 56. And *Elias* is no fit Pattern for you to follow, who are my Disciples; I am your Master, learn by my example, to seek after the Salvation and Preservation of men, rather than their destruction.

Wherefore, let all Faithful Christians (especially the Ministers of the Gospel) follow no other President: This is the Lesson that Christ hath set us to learn of him, to be *meek* and *humble*, pitrifull and mercifull. If we look into those sacred Acts of his, those miracles and wonders which he did; You shall find them all to be Beneficial, or no way hurtful or destructive to the life of man. The most terrible wonders that our Saviour did whilst he was upon the Earth, were those two; The *blasting of the barren Figg-Tree*, and the *drowning of the herd of Swine* in the Lake; but neither of these were any way prejudicial to the Person, or life of Man, Woman, or Child; the former being but *Symbolical*, not done in any spleen to the Tree, but a

Luke 9.54.  
55.  
Enlightened.

Verse 55.

Reas.  
Verse 56.

Use.

Math. 11.  
29.

Math. 21.  
29.  
Math. 8.  
30, 31.

*Real Emblems* of his severity to the unfruitful; The latter being only *Permissive*; It was the Devils doing, Christ only gave way to those evil Spirits (which seek the destruction both of Man and Beast) upon their earnest suit, (being cast out of Man) to enter into the Swine, and to this end was their suite granted that those *Gardarens* might take notice from what a multitude of Devils they were delivered; and how easie it had bin for the same Power, to have allowed those Spirits to have seized upon their Persons, as well as upon their Swine. Still Christ made good that Style of his, *The Preserver of men*: To Man he was evermore most favourable, and indulgent, in so much that when one of his Enemies, who came to apprehend him, lost but an Ear in that ill quarrel, he restored it again unto him, albeit he came to take away his Life. Some indeed, Christ did correct and scourge, as we read, *John 2.15*. But whom did he slay or kill?

Job 7.20.

Luke 22.

51.

Job 2.15.

B. B. Hall.

Con. in

Nov. Test.

This saving and beneficent disposition that was in Christ, we ought to imitate; the more we can help to save, the more like we are to Him that came to save all; the more destructive we are, the more we resemble him who is *Abaddon*, a Murderer from the beginning. It becomes not the mouth of a Minister of the Gospel to be breathing out little else then Fire and Sword, pitch Fields, Sieges, and slaughter of Brethren; We are *Shepherds* to feed, and preserve as much as may be; not Roaring Lyons, nor Hungry Bears to rend and tear in pieces; we should incline rather to mercy, then to Justice; if we err, it is safest to err on that hand.

It is observed by some, (and that, not impertinently, nor unprofitably), how that *Amen* under the Law was answered to the *Curses*, but not to the *Blessings*; as we read, *Deut. 27.15,—26*. Every particular Curse must have a several *Amen*: But in the next Chapter, where the *Blessings* follow, there is no *Amen* affixed, nor commanded to be affixed to them, *Deut. 28.2,—12*. But it is otherwise in the Gospel; To the *Blessings* there is an *Amen*, but not to the *Curses*. If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be *Anathema Maranatha* (saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 16. 22*.) A fearful Curse, but there is no *Amen* to that: *Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, Ephel. 6.*

Hugo.

Card.

Deut. 27.

15,—26.

Deut. 28.2.

—12.

1 Cor. 16.

22.

Eph. 6.24.



# The Figg-lefs Figg-Tree.

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24. there is *Amen* to that; and thence we may infer, that that Spirit which was futable to the time of the Law, fuits not fo well with the times of the Gofpel. I fhall leave this nore to your own private meditations, and now proceed with the Sentence.

*Thou fhalt cut it down.]*

Text.

We fhall take leave to make fome little ftop, and pawfe a while upon the manner of Speech; it implying fomewhat that may be useful for us. Bernard upon the *Canticles* hath this paffage, *Ligatum habent sancti Deum, ut non puniat, nifi permiffum ipfi.* The Saints of God have him fo bound, that he cannot punish without their permiffion and leave: And fo it feems by this manner of fpeaking which the Drefler ufeth, Then after that thou [*fhalt*] do it: as if till then he fhould not; He would flay his hand a while longer, but in cafe that Tree fhould continue barren, after further pains had bin beftowed on it. he would then contentedly give way to the ftoak of Juftice. You fee then,

Bern. in  
Cant.  
Ser. 30.

By fervent prayer God is fo overpowred, as that he cannot prefently destroy. The Prayers of God's Servants are as bands where-with his hands are tyed that he cannot fmite.

Doct.

And fo much the Scripture intimates, *Iſa. 64. 7. There is none that calleth upon thy Name, that ftirreth up himfelf to take hold Thee.* By zealous prayer the Saints are faid to take hold on God; they manyle (as it were) his hands, lay hold on the Axe, and will not fuffer him to ftrike; fo that he cannot do any thing, till they let go. As the Angel fayd to Lot, *I cannot do any thing till thou art gone,* Gen. 19. 22. So, Gen. 32. 26. &c. *Let me go* (faith God to Jacob). Behold, the great God petitioning to finful man (faith Gregory,) and that which is yet more, Man denying the great God's Petition; *I will not let thee go* (faith Jacob :) he holds him faft, and gives not over, till he had what he fought. The like we find in *Exod. 32. 10. Let me alone* (faith God to Moses). Why Lord, Who lets thee? My hands are tyed from executing wrath, whilft thy hands, *Moses,* are up for mercy; His prayers were as it were bands to tie God's hands, fo that he could not ftrike. O infinite goodneffe, of the invincible God, to fuffer himfelf to be as conquered, by the zealous and fervent prayers of his poor Servants.

*Iſa. 64. 7.*  
*Quaſi manu ſua*  
*Deum ambiunt orantes.* Tertul.  
Apol.  
Gen. 19.  
22, & 32.  
26.

*Exod. 32.*  
*10.*

Reas. 1.

Dan. 9. 17.

Joh. 14.  
14, 14, &  
15, 16, &  
16, 23, 24.

Rev. 2.

Zach. 4. 6.

Rom. 8.

15, 26.

2 Sam. 14.

19.

*Ab ipso acci-  
piunt ut  
contra im-  
perium per-  
cussionis  
ejus oppo-  
nantur, atq;  
ut ita dix-  
erim ab ip-  
sa Deo se  
erigunt  
contra ip-  
sum.* Greg.  
Mor. lib. 9.  
c. 12.  
Jam. 5. 16.  
Math. 15.  
23.  
Enlightened.

And no marvel; For first, They come in a powerful and prevailing Name, *for the Lords sake*, Dan. 9. 17. In Christ's Name they ask. *Themistocles* treated with King *Admetus* holding the young Prince (the Father's darling) in his bosome, and thereby prevailed: So do the Faithful, they bring Christ with them when they come into the Fathers presence, (who is dearer to him then the young Prince was to King *Admetus*), and for his sake he will deny them nothing, *John* 14. 13, 14, & 15, 16, & 16, 23, 24. Yea his own Name and Glory pleaderh for them, *For thy Names sake* (saith *David*); and God cannot forget his own Name.

*Reas. 2.* Secondly, They are assisted by a powerful and prevayling Spirit, *Zach. 4. 6. Rom. 8. 15, 26.* And this Spirit is God's own Spirit, which he gives us to pray with; *Is not the hand of Joab in all this* (sayd *David*?) So, is not my Spirit in this, saith God? The Saints receive from God (saith *Gregory*), what they oppose to his blows, and (as I may say) From him it is whereby they lift up themselves against him, and whereby they are enabled to resist him; So that in wrestling with his Saints, he wrestles with himself, and should deny himself, in denying of his Spirit which calls upon him: In this respect the Prayer of a Righteous man is sayd to have *great strength*, *Jam. 5. 16.* as the words may be interpreted.

*Reas. 3.* Thirdly, They have a strong Hand or Arm, where with they do lay hold on God, and that is *Faith*. Thus that poor Woman of *Canaan* wrestled, and overcame, *Mat. 15. 23.* Many checks and snibs she suffered, yet would not be staved off; still she cries, *Lord help.* The Disciples reprove her, Christ rates her, bids her be gone; tells her, she is little better then a Dogg or Whelp, she thanks him for it; picks comfort out of that, and resolves to play the Dogg's part. so that he will be pleased to be the Master; If he beats her out at one Door, she will come in at the other, that she may at least eat the *crumbs that fall under his Table*; a Crum of bread should serve her turn, let her be a Whelp, or any thing, so she may find mercy: Thus her Faith holds out, and gets the Day, she goes away with this praise; *O Woman, great is thy Faith.* and hath what she would; *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Faith is a stout and strong grace, it conquers



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quers Kingdoms, *Heb. 11.* removes Mountaines, *Math. 17. 20.* overcomes the World, *1 John 5. 4.* Yea, and Heaven too, *Jam. 5. 17.* What is it that God can do, that Faith cannot do within the Sphear of its own activity? faith a Judicious Divine.

4. Fourthly, They bring with them strong Arguments, and press the Lord with strong Motives; as with his Truth, Promise, Covenant; So, *Gen. 32. 9.* — 13. *Jacob* urgeth God, 1. with the Covenant made between him and his Fathers: *O God of my Father Abraham, and God of my Father Isaac.* 2. From God's commandment and his obedience thereunto, *Thou art the Lord that saydst unto me, Return into thy Country, and to thy Kindred:* 3ly, From his Promise made unto him, *Thou saydst I will be with thee.* 4ly, From his acknowledgement of God's Mercy, and his own Unworthynesse; *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies which thou hast shewed:* 5ly, From the Relation he had to God. *I am thy Servant.* 6ly, From the condition of his Adversary, he being his enraged Brother *Esau.* *Deliver me, I pray thee from the hand of my Brother, from the hand of Esau.* 7ly, From the extreame danger that He, his Wives, and Children were all in; *for I fear least he will come and smite Me, and the Mother with the Children.* 8ly, From a Promise that God made to him, in respect of his Posterity; *And thou saydst I will do thee good, and make thy seed as the sands of the Sea:* All these are brought by *Jacob* to urge God to be gracious: The like might be shewed in the prayer that *Moses* made for the People, *Exod. 32.* and in *Solomon's* prayer, *1 King. 8. 23.* — 27. And in *Daniels*, *Chap. 9.* And in *Dauids*, frequently, in the *Psalmes*, That Covenant which God hath made with his, and sealed unto, which was founded in Blood; even that Covenant casteth it self open before God in prayer, and intreateth God as he is Holy, Just, and true of his Word, that he would give a beeing to his Promises. Now God cannot deny Himself; being thus pressed he must needs yield.

Lastly, Prayer is an Engine, ordained by God himself to be overcome withal; It is a strength that he hath promised to yield unto; an Authority that he hath promised to obey: It is a Speech that commands admiration from us, *Ia. 45. 11.* *Ask of*

me

*Heb. 11.*  
33.  
*Math. 16.*  
20.  
*1 Joh. 5. 4.*  
*Jam. 5. 17.*  
*Mr. Sam.*  
*Ward in*  
*his Life of*  
*Faith.*  
*Gen. 32. 9.*  
— 13.

*Exod. 32.*  
*11, 12, 13.*  
*23.* — 27.  
*1 King. 8.*  
*Dan. 9.*

5.  
See my  
Friend at  
Mid-night.  
Pag. 307.  
*Ia. 45. 21.*

me things to come, concerning my Sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me. He is graciously pleased to be over-powred (as it were), not onely that we should have power with Him, by our Prayers, as *Jacob* had, *Hos.* 12.3,4. but power over Him, so as to command him, and require of him, what concerns the good of his Church and People.

*Quest.*  
*Pl. 80. 14.* But whence comes it then, That God's Church and Vineyard is such a Sufferer? How comes it to passe, that the *Beare* out of the Wood doth waste it, and the *Fox* of the Field doth spoyle it?

*Resp.*  
*Amos 8. 1, 2.* The Sins of God's People are sometimes like Summer Fruit, so that the Lord will not passe by them any more. They are so great in themselves, and admit of so many, and grievous aggravations, as that he is weary of repenting, inso much that he is resolved, if *Daniel*, *Noah*, and *Job*, those Worthies of the World, should entreat for them, yet they should save but their own Souls by their Righteousnesse; Now, in such a case he commonly makes way for his Judgments.

First, By removing out of the way, those who stand in the way to hinder him; He houses them who stood in the gapp to turn away his wrath. It is observed, that *Methusalem*, the longest liver amongst men, dyed that year, when the all-destroying Flood came; and *Enoch* (styled a God amongst the People) was first taken up into Heaven: Good King *Josiah* was taken away by death, that God might bring upon the Land, that Evil which he had threatned and intended; and in that Grave wherein he was interred, the Liberty, Glory, and Peace of *Jewry* lay also buried. *Jerusalem* shall be destroyed, but not till they who were marked were fled to *Pella*, whither they are no sooner gathered, but, by *Titus* and *Vespasian*, the City was besieged, and soon after ruined: All *Italy* shall be grievously troubled, but holy *Ambrose* must be first at rest: *Africa* shall be spoiled, and the City *Hippo* besieged by the *Vandals*, but not till *Austin's* deceale: *Germany* was distracted, but *Luther* must first be peaceably and honourably buried. It is a sad preface of Judgment, when God takes away those that should stand in the breach to turn away his wrath, *Isa.* 3. 2, 3. & 57. 1. When the fairest Flowers in the Garden are plucked up, it is very probable that

*Hierom de*  
*Hebraicis*  
*trad. in*  
*Gen. 16.*  
*2 Chro. 34.*  
*28.*

*Ezek. 9. 4.*

*Isa. 3. 2, 3.*  
*& 57. 1.*



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that God intends to lay it waste, and turn it into a Wilderness. No Church nor State can long stand, when the main Pillars are undermined; The *Heart-strings* hold not long, after the *Eye-strings* are broken.

Secondly, If in case that He remove not such out of the way, but suffers such to live, and be Eye-witnesses of those miseries that befall the Land or Nation; then God makes way for Judgment, by restraining them from praying for such a People, sometimes inhibiting them, as He did *Jeremiah*, cap. 7. 14, 15, 16. *Pray not for this People, for I will not hear thee.* God would not that such precious breath, as that of Prayer, should be in vain, or without success; and therefore He acquaints him with his Resolution and irrevocable Decree and Purpose, which He before had affirmed with many words of most earnest and vehement Asseveration, cap. 4. 28. and afterwards did ratify and confirm by Oath, cap. 22. 5. whereby the Prophet did evidently perceive, that it was an absolute Interdiction, and not like that Inhibition given to *Moses*, *Exod.* 32. 10. which carried with it the force of a mild Instruction, and intimated, that it was in *Moses* power to give way to God's wrath or not, so as *Moses* thereby received encouragement to pray for them. But should *Jeremiah* have gone about to hinder or crosse God, by his Prayer, from doing that which he was so absolutely resolved to do, he had highly offended therein: But this Prohibition given him, was by Revelation from Heaven, and Extraordinary, in respect of us, from whom His Decree (in that respect) is hidden: For so long as a Church, or State, hath being, we ought not to cease praying for it (as formerly hath been said). Nor are we commanded to cast any out of our Prayers, but those who have sinned against the Holy Ghost, (which is no easy matter to discern.)

There is another more ordinary way, whereby he restrains the Godly from this duty in the behalf of others; and that is, by suffering them to be asleep, as *Jonas* was under Hatches, when the Ship is in greatest danger; or else by with-drawing the Spirit of Prayer and Supplication, and denying assistance to pray for such: Their hearts are marvellously taken off from them, so as they scarce remember them in their devotions; and when they do,

Donn's  
Serm. 1618  
Jer. 7. 14,  
15.  
Enlightened

Jer. 4. 28.  
cap. 22. 5.

Exod. 32.  
10.

Non debuit  
pro statu  
Regni ora-  
re. Cale.

Est speciale  
Interdictum.  
Piscat. in  
loc.

Iſa. 64.7.

do, it is but very coldly and faintly, they *ſtirr not up themſelves* to lay hold upon the Lord on their behalf. And when it falls out thus, it is a woſull ſign that God makes way for Judgment. To apply this briefly,

Uſe.

If frequent and faithfull Prayer be ſo prevalent with the God of Heaven, let it be had in high eſteem with us, and of great account, as the chiefest means ordained of God to ſtay his wrath, and, in time of trouble, to obtain deliverance for us; If Prayer prevail not, nothing will: For ſuch is the wonderfull working efficacy of fervent Prayer, that nothing is impoſſible to it. And that we may think more highly of it than we have done, call to mind ſome of thoſe mighty things that have been effected by it, and recorded in Hiſtory, both divine and humane. Do we not read in Scripture, how *Moses* divided the red Sea, and cauſed it to run back, ſo that God's *Israel* walked upon firm ground in the miſt of it? This was done by the power of his Prayer, *Exod.* 14.15.

Exod. 14. 15.

Joſh. 10. 13, 14.

Do we not read of the Sun's ſtanding ſtill in the miſt of Heaven, not haſting to go down a whole day together, ſo that *there was no day like that before or after it*? This was done upon *Joſuah's* Prayer. And have you not read, at another time, of the Sun's going back in the Firmament, ten Degrees, according to the ſhadow on *Ahaz's* Dyall? This was alſo done upon the Prayer of *Iſaiah*.

2 King. 20. 11.

Dan. 6. &amp; 3.

Have we not heard of the ſtopping of the mouths of greedy Lyons, and cloſing of their gnawing chappes, being almoſt famiſhed for want of prey? And of quenching the violence of raging fire, ſo that it could not ſinge a haire of the Head, nor leave the ſmell of it on the Garments? Why, Theſe things have been effected by the Prayers of *Daniel*, and the three Children,

1 King. 18. 38.

Jam. 5. 17.

Have we not read of Fire that was brought from Heaven three times together; and how the Heavens were ſhut up three years, ſo that they gave no rain, and then opened again, ſo that the clouds powred down in abundance? Theſe things were brought to paſſe by the Prayers of *Elijah*.

Num. 16.

Have we not read or heard of the Earth's opening her mouth and ſwallowing up of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* with all their



their Goods and Families, and closing again upon them? This was done upon the Complaint and Prayer of *Moses* unto God against them for their Rebellion.

It were infinite to recount all the noble Acts of Prayer recorded in the Scripture; as of the raising of the dead; opening of Prison doors, and loosing the Prisoners bands; healing diseases, that have seemed incurable to flesh and blood; casting out of Devils: It is a kind of Omnipotent thing, it can command Heaven, Earth, and Hell, (as I have shewed you upon another Parable.) Nothing, under God, Omnipotent, but it. *Luther* was wont to call it the great Ordinance; and indeed, with that we make our battery at the walls of Heaven; In a moment it pierceth the Clouds, and procures a Victory; sometimes before the Report be heard on Earth; or We imagine that it is gone out of our lips: It bowes God's Ear, and causeth Him to hear, *Psal.* 34. 15. It opens his Eyes, and causeth Him to see, *Exod.* 3. 7. 9. It plucketh out his Sword, and causeth Him to smite; and, on the other side, it causeth Him to put it up again, and smite no more *2 Sam.* 24. It over-rules God in any thing that may be for the Church's good. The Lord did according to the word of *Moses* (saith the Text, *Exod.* 8. 13.) That *Moses* did according to the Word of the Lord, is evident enough, and no wonder at that: but that God should do according to the Word of *Moses*, and obey the voice of man, that is strange indeed, yet, So it is. In humane History we have many very memorable Examples of the prevailing power of Prayer with God.

By Prayer the good *Constantinus* was said to strengthen his Family; but *Constantine* his Son, did hereby fortify all his Empire. When his Enemy *Licinius* began his Warr with Exorcisms and Charms, he undertook all with Prayer and holy Meditations, and therefore the Lord of Heaven made him to be Lord of the Field; Such comfort did he find in Prayer, that he stamped upon the Coyn, the Image or Effigies of himself, kneeling unto his God; as ascribing all his Victories to Prayer especially, rather than to the Sword.

When *Marcus Aurelius Verus* the Emperour was in Germany, and in the Field against 970000 Enemies, (Germans and Sarmatians) and in great distresse for want of Water, the Legi-

1 King. 17.  
21.

Ag. 12. 5.

Mat. 17. 21

Oratione fide-

lis omnipoten-

tens. Luth.

Et quod

Omnipotentia

Præcumbit

Alsted. Sy. 3.

Theol. lib.

4. c. 2.

See my

Friend at

Midnight,

p. 432.

Psal. 34. 15

Exod. 3. 7,

9.

2 Sam. 24.

Exod. 8. 13

Euseb. de  
Vu. Const.  
2. 4. & 4.  
15.

Euseb. Eccl.  
Hist. 1. 5.  
c. 1.

Tertul. in  
Apolog.  
Xiphilius  
de Marc.  
Antea.  
Cum ipsa  
affuit  
oratione  
Deus. Just.  
Mart. Apol.  
z.  
Ambros. de  
obit. The-  
d.  
Ruffinus.  
Sacrat.  
Socr. Scol.  
Euseb. l. 7.  
c. 22.  
Aug. de  
Civit. Dei.  
l. 5. c. 23.

Plut. in vit.  
Numæ.  
O admiranda-  
bilem pia-  
rum Pietatis  
vim, quibus  
coelestia oc-  
cident. Hostes  
terret ma-  
nus illa, quæ  
Victoriæ  
sua trophe-  
a in ipsis  
coeli orbi-  
bus figit.  
Bachelce-  
rus.

on called *Melitina*, afterward *Julinæ*, being Christians, fell down on their knees in the open field, and relieved him; for so soon as they had prayed, God was with them, and sent Thunderbolts on the heads of their Enemies, and a cooling shower to refresh their own wants: so that the Prayers of the Church were received as a garrison into the Empire.

Afterwards, In the time of that good Emperour *Theodosius*, in a fought field against *Eugenius*, (when he had almost lost the day,) he alighted from his Horse, and stepping before his Army in the face of his Enemy, he kneeled down and cryed to God, *Ubi es Deus Theodosi*, Where is *Theodosius* his God? And God gave him the day; he won the field: And upon another occasion, at another time, upon earnest Prayer to Christ, made by the whole City, being assembled together; A grievous Tempest was suddenly turned into calmness, and their former dearth and scarcity into abundance of plenty.

When *Rhadogesus*, King of the *Goths*, with a puissant Army recovered *Rome*, and by reason of the small preparations in the City, no hope could be expected from man, then they cryed to the Lord, and he fought for them, in that their extremity, and so discomfited the Enemies, that in one day an Army of 100000 was utterly defeated; not a man of the *Romane* side slain, no not so much as wounded.

The power of Prayer is so well known and ratified by experience, that there was never any State (Christian or Gentile) but they have acknowledged it; Insomuch, that Infidels in their Idolatry, and Hereticks in their Schism, have had recourse unto it: Yea, *Turks* and *Barbarians*, at this day, enjoin Prayer and religious Service to their Idols, before they go out to War, and for the security of their State: *Ἐγὼ δὲ δέω*, said *Numa Pompilius*, a Heathen King of the *Romans*, to one that brought him news that his Enemies were at hand to surprize him: What tell you me of Enemies? I am about sacrificing to God; no danger could make them forbear superstitious Rites. Oh! the admirable power of godly Prayer (saith one), to which, heavenly things give place; That hand terrifyeth the Enemy, which fastneth the tokens of its Victory in the Celestiall Orbs. *Plutarch*, in the life of *Pyrrhus*, saith of *Cyneas*, a *Thessalian* Oratour, that

he



he overcame more by words and Speeches, than *Pyrrhus* by the Sword: One Prayer is more powerful to obtain a Victory than ten Swords. In that famous battle of *Israel* against the *Amalekites*, the Prayer of *Moses* gave a sensible advantage to *Israel's* side, and, indeed, the Victory. For when *his hands were up*, then *Israel prevailed*; but when *they were down*, then *Amalek prevailed*: And again, we read, that when some of the *Israelites* warred with the *Hagarites*, in the midst of the battle, *they cried unto the Lord, and he heard them, and gave their enemies into their hands, and all that were with them, because they put their trust in Him*, (saith the Text, *1 Chron. 5. 20.*) An Army of Prayers, is as strong as an Army of men; yea, one man praying, may do more than many fighting.

Exod. 17.  
11.

1 Chr. 5. 20

Jer. 17. 8.

Pl. 28. 7, 8.

Use 2.

But *cursed is he who maketh Flesh his Arm, and trusteth not in the Lord his God*. To the truth of which Verdict, the greatest Potentates of the World have subscribed with their own blood: *Nebuchadnezzar* trusted in his City *Babel*, and it was his Confusion: *Xerxes* trusted in the multitude of his men, and his multitude encombred him; *Darius* in his wealth; and that sold him; *Rehoboam* in his young Counsellours, and his young Counsellours lost him: *Cesar* in his old Senators, and his Senators conspired against him. *Hi curruum, & illi equorum, &c.* these trust in *Charriots, and those in Horses*: But let us remember the Name of the Lord our God; So, when *they are brought down and fallen, we shall rise and stand upright*.

And, as this should bring Prayer into greater request with us; so it should cause praying Christians to be more respected by us, (especially God's Ministers, the Dressers of God's Vineyard) for these are the Chariots and Horsemen of *Israel*.

But men (commonly) deal by these, as Boyes do by Wall-nut Trees; in faire weather they cudgel them, but in foul weather they are enforced to run to them for shelter: So *Themistocles* said of him self, that the People dealt with him as they dealt with the Plane-Tree, in faire weather every passenger did crop him, but in a Tempest, in Thundring, and Lightning, they got under his boughs: Thus *Pharaoh* sends to *Moses*, when God's Judgements were on him, and desires his Prayers; *Glorie over me* (said *Moses* to him) that is, fear me, reject me yet thou must be beholding to me

*Nux ego  
juncta vie  
qua sum si-  
ne crimine  
vite,  
A populo  
saxis pre-  
torum epe-  
ror, O id.  
Exod. 3. 9.  
Explained.*

1 King. 13.  
6.

Gen. 20. 7.

Job. 40. 8.

Use 3.

for my Prayers, or thou art like to lye under that plague, for all that thy wizards can do to thy relief and help. So did *Jeroboam* when his hand was withered, he was glad to submit, and desire the Prophet to intreat the Lord for him, that his hand might be restored, 1 King. 13. 6. Plagues and Judgments bring Prophets and praying Saints into request and favour. The drowning man will reach out his hand to that bough which he condemned whilst he stood safe on shoar: When the Sword, Famine, or Pestilence, is amongst us; or the snares of death do compass us about; when the wrath of God falls upon the naked Soul, and the conscience is wounded within, as the body is pained without; Oh then, send for that good man, that Godly Minister! desire his earnest Prayers on my behalf: Now these are in request & credit with us, whom before, in the daies of our prosperity and peace, we passed over as superfluous Creatures, of whom there was little Use: But if you desire that they should pray for you in your extremity, do not sleight them, nor wrong them in the daies of your prosperity. Hearken to that advice which God gave *Abimelech*, and follow it, *Go to Abraham* (saith God), *and restore him his wife, that he may pray for thee, for he is a Prophet of the Lord*: So, go to God's Ministers and faithful Servants, make your peace with them, in time; satisfy them for the wrongs and injuries done unto them, that they may pray for you, and prevail with God on your behalf. And remember what God said to *Job's* friends, *Go to my Servant Job and submit your selves, and my Servant Job shall pray for you, for him I will accept; otherwise, I will deal with you after your folly.*

Lastly, If the Prayers of the Godly be so powerfull with God, (as hath been shewed,) then, let all such as have any Interest in God, improve it, and stir up themselves to take hold on God. Look on the present Estate of the Church, and Nation, and you must needs confesse, that this Exhortation is a word in season. Judgments have not onely been threatned against us, but in part executed upon us; and the Axe is still at work, hewing and hacking at the very Root. What is become of Religion, Lawes, Liberties, that we have stood out so much for? Is not all in a confusion and combustion (as yet), both in Church, and State? Help with your Prayers, Tears; they are your best

weapons;



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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weapons: lay hold on God, let him not go till his Indignation be over past; give him no rest, till he establish peace, and make our English Nation once more a praise upon the Earth.

The Prayer of one Dresser may do much with God, How much more the Prayers of many? yea, of the whole Church of God, were they united? What Judgment cannot many hands together (if in time lifted up) bear off? What Blessings are they not able to pull down from Heaven on us? If one Prisoner in a Jayle cryes out for bread, we pity him; if the whole Jayle begg of us, we cannot deny them: When all our Children come about us, we cannot so easily shake them off, as one. How mightily might we prevail with God, if we conjoynd our forces? Many drops make a great flood: O! joyn Prayers to Prayers; Tears to Tears; Sighs to Sighs; then shall you find, that the face of our Church and State would be quickly changed: God will not onely wipe off blood from our bodies, but tears from the eyes of this his sad and disconsolate Spouse: *Grata & hac Vis*, God is well pleased when such violence is offered Him.

*Thou shalt cut it down,]*

He saith not, *I will cut it down*; but, *Thou shalt*; and why not *He*, as he was willed? Alasse! It could not but be an unpleasing Office for him, who had bestowed so much pains and labour about that Tree, now to sell it: If the fatall stroak must be given, and that there be no remedy, let it be done by *thine own hand*, spare mine: (So some Interpret it.)

Or rather thus; *Thou shalt cut it down*, not I, in that it is by *thy Command* that I do it; Done it shall be, I will submit and yield obedience to thy Will, for I am but thy Servant, and therein execute thy Will and pleasure. And thence observe we,

*Whatever be the Instrument, or Whoever be the Agent, God is the Principal Efficient of those Judgments which befall a People.*

Let the *Axe* be what it will; or the *Dresser* who he will; It is the *Lord of the Vineyard* that cuts down the Figg-Tree.

Sometimes, God doth make the *Unreasonable* Creature his *Axe* or *Instrument*, in hewing and cutting down; and sometimes the

*Coit catus.*  
*Terru.*  
*Apolog.e.*  
19.

*Vis unita*  
*fortior.*

*Text.*

*Doct.*

the *Reasonable*; but whether these, or those, all are but as the *Axe* in his hand.

In all the Ten Plagues of *Egypt*, it was God that did smite  
 Exod. 7. 17. All those Judgments threatned against the disobedient, *Levit. 26. I will send* (saith God). *He sent fiery Serpents* amongst the People, *Numb. 21. 6.* he smites with blasting and mildew; sends Famine, Plague, and Pestilence, *Amos 4. 6, 9, 10, 11.* Murrain of Cattle is called *his Hand*, *Exod. 9. 3.* Pestilence, *his Sword*, *1 Chron. 21. 12.* Sicknesse, *his Arrows*, *Psal. 91. 5.* He it is that doth hurt, and shoot; wound, spoyle, and overturn; be the Instrument what it will be.

Sometimes the *Reasonable Creature* is used as his Agent, in the Execution of his Judgments: *Angels* and *Men*, both *Good* and *Bad* are used as the Instruments of his wrath.

*Good men* are sometimes made use of for that purpose; So God's Prophets and Ministers are said to hew and slay, *Hof. 6. 5.* But whom they cut down, by vertue of their place and Office, God cuts down: *I hewed them by the Prophets, I have slain them by the Word of my mouth; I have done it, I have done it* (saith the Lord).

Sometimes the Civill Magistrate is employed in that Service; he lifts up the *Axe*, and inflicts temporall Punishments on Delinquents: *David will cut off all wicked Doers* from the City of God, *Psal. 101. 5, 8.* And yet, in so doing, he is but the *Minister of God, A Revenger to execute wrath upon them that do evil*, *Rom. 13. 4.* The Judgment is *God's*, *2 Chron. 19. 5, 6.* God doth own it as his. The Soul that turneth after such as have familiar Spirits, and after Wizards, *I will even set my face against that Soul, and will cut him off from amongst his People* (saith God, *Levit. 20. 6.*) God saith, He will do it; and yet this Cutting off was by the hand of the Magistrate, who was not to suffer a Witch to live. *Exod. 22. 18.*

And as God makes use of *Good men*; so, oftentimes of *Bad*, in the Execution of his Judgments: The King of *Babylon* was God's *Sword* to cut down, and spoyle the *Egyptians*: God did put the *Sword* into his hand; and strengthen his Arms; and in so doing, it was God Himself that brake the Arms of *Pharoah*, *Ezek. 30. 24.* The proud *Assyrian* was the *Rod* of his *Anger*,  
 -and



and the *Staffe of his Indignation*: He sent him to punish his own People, *Isa. 10. 5, 6.* He was but the *Axe* in God's hand to hew down *Judah*, His *Saw* to divide it, His *Rod* to scourge it, His *Staff* to bear it; And when that *Axe*, that *Saw*, that *Rod*, that *Staff* did magnifie it self against the hand that used it; God upbraids it for so doing, as if the Instrument could do ought without the Arm that moved it, *verse 15.*

The *Angels* both *Good* and *Bad* are made use of, in the Execution of God's Judgments. It was a good Angel that smote the *Israelites* with Plague and Pestilence, *2 Sam. 24.* But it was the Lord that sent that Pestilence upon *Israel*, *verse 15.* And it was the Angel of the Lord that slew all the first born of *Egypt*, but that Angel was no other then God's Instrument, for it was God that smote them. *Exod. 12. 29.*

The *Bad Angels*, the *Devils* are likewise God's Agents and Instruments of his wrath; An *evil spirit* it was that vexed *Saul*, but that spirit was sent from God to do it; *1 Sam. 16. 14.* A *lying spirit* was in the mouth of *Ahab's* Prophets, to seduce him, but it was God that put that lying spirit into their mouths; He sent it forth, and gave it a Commission to do what it did, *1 King. 22. 22, 23.* And thus God used *Sathan* as his Instrument, in afflicting *Job* for the tryal of his graces, (of which more anon).

This Truth delivered hath strong Confirmation from Scripture, the mouth of God hath said it, *2 King. 21. 12, 13, 14.* *2 Chron. 5. 6.* *Isa. 28. 21, & 45. 6, 7.* *Jer. 18. 11.* *Amos 3. 6.* The godly have acknowledged this, *Ruth 1. 20.* *Job 1. 21, & 6. 4, & 16, 12.* *Lament. 1. 12, 17.* *Hos. 6. 1.* Yea, the wicked cannot but confesse it, *Exod. 8. 19.* *2 King. 6. 33.* *Jon. 1. 14.* So *Tiberius* was wont to say, that Thunder was the power of God. *Homer*, that the Plague was the Arrow of God; and *Hippocrates*, that it was sent, as a punishment from God: Superstitious Heathens have subscribed to the truth of what is now delivered.

There are two or three Objections might be made against this, which we shall briefly say somewhat unto, for the farther clearing of the poynt.

*Isa. 10. 5, 6.*

Verse 15.

*2 Sam. 24.*  
Verse 15.

*Exod. 12.*  
29.

*1 Sam. 16.*  
14.

*1 King. 22.*  
22, 23.

*2 King. 21.*  
12, 13, 14.  
*2 Cor. 15.*  
6.

*Isa. 28. 21,*  
*& 45. 6, 7.*  
*Jer. 18. 11.*  
*Amos 3. 6.*  
*Ruth 1. 20.*

*Job 1. 21,*  
*& 6. 4. &*  
*16, 12.*  
*Lament. 1,*  
*12, 17.*

*Hos. 6. 1.*  
*Exod. 8. 19*  
*2 King. 6.*  
33.  
*Jon. 1. 14.*

If

Object.

If the Devil and his Agents have a hand in many of these Judgments which are inflicted on a Nation and People: How can it be sayd that God is the Author of them?

Resp.

In three respects it may be safely said: First, In regard of his *purpose* and *ordination*; for they do nothing but what God purposed before hand to have done, as the Church acknowledged in the Case of Christ, Acts 4. 27, 28. *Of a truth, against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast annoynted, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the People of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done.* All these Enemies of Christ (notwithstanding all their plotting and maliciousnesse) did nothing, nor could they do any thing against him, but that which God in his eternal Counsel had both foreseen and decreed, to permit for the Salvation of his Church. Thus, St. Paul (preventing that temptation which might arise from his sufferings) puts the *Thessalonians* in mind of this, that God had *appointed them thereunto*, 1 Thes. 3. 3. where the Argument lyeth not so much in the inevitable necessity (saith a Learned Expositor), as in the conformity that should be in us, to every will and appoyntment of God.

Act. 4. 27,  
28.

1 Thes. 3.

3.  
Dr. Sclat. in  
loc.

Secondly, In respect of the *Executing* of that his Decree, according to his purpose; and therein is God's hand evident (as we have shewed you in the proof of the poynt). It is *Ambrose* his Observation, that in all Afflictions, God's hand and the Devil's hand are but one hand: *Stretch out thy hand* (saith Sathan to God concerning *Job*) *and touch all that he hath*, Job 1. 11. Behold, all that he hath *is in thy hand* or power, (replied God to Sathan, *verse 12.*) Put forth *thy hand* now, and touch his bones and his flesh (saith Sathan to God, *Job 2. 5.*) Behold, he *is in thine hand* (saith God), *but touch not his Life*, *verse 6.* And that holy man *Job*, in all his tryals and temptations, saw Gods hand therein, *Job. 1. 21.*

Job 1. 11,  
12.

Job 2. 5, 6.

Job 1. 21.

Thirdly, In his *ordering* and *disposing* of all his Judgments that are inflicted, with all Circumstances that belong unto them, by his most wise and powerful providence. *You thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good* (sayd *Joseph* to his Brethren, *Gen. 50. 20.*) and God turned it to good; not onely good

Gen. 50. 20



good to *Joseph*, who was no partaker in the evil, but good even to them, who meant nothing but evil: they shot at him with their arrows of envy and hatred, and  *sorely grieved him*, Gen. 49. 23. But as we read in that Story, 2 *King*. 13. 17. (when *Joash* shot, the Prophet's hand was upon the King's hand, so) God's hand was upon the hand of those Archers that shot at *Joseph*. From what hand soever Affliction comes, from whose Bow soever that Arrow flies, yet God's hand is upon that hand that shoots it; and, albeit it may hit the mark, according to their purpose that shot the arrow; yet, it hath the effect and working (both on good and bad) according to his hand that orders all for his glory, and his Churches good.

Gen. 49. 23.  
2 King. 13.  
17.

But if it be thus, How comes it about that God doth punish the enemies of his Church, seeing they are but his Agents and Instruments, and his hand is principal therein in ordering and disposing?

Obj. 2.

The *secret will* of God, is not the Rule for us to be guided by, but that which is *revealed* to us; neither the Devil nor damned can crosse that; they must do it whether they will or no: but running against the revealed will of God, their condemnation is just; and this they do most usually.

Resp.

Secondly, Put case the *Act* be enjoyed by God, and they do therein what God enjoined them to do, yet they do it not in that *manner* that they should, nor do they aim at the right end in doing of it. Instance in *Jehu*, who was commanded by God to smite the House of *Ahab* his Master, and to avenge the blood of his Servants the Prophets, at the hand of *Jezabel*, 2 *King*. 9. 6, 7, 8. which he did accordingly, and was commended by God for so doing, 2 *King*. 10. 30. But in that he did not this in the sincerity and uprightness of his heart; but with a corrupt mind, poisoned with ambition, as appears, 2 *King*. 10. 31. God threatens to *avenge the blood of Jezreel* (that is, the blood of *Ahab's* posterity, which he in his cruelty and ambition shed in the Valley of *Jezreel*) upon the House of *Jehu* *Hos* 1. 4. The like we read of the King of *Assur*, whom God sent against his People to afflict them for their Hypocrisie and Idolatry, but he had other ends and aims; *He meaneth not so* (saith Go.) *neither doth he think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off Nations, not*

2 King 9.  
6, 7, 8.  
2 King 10.  
30.  
Verse 31.

Hos 1. 4.

Isa. 10. 7.

Obj. 3.  
Omne A-  
gent, agit  
sibi simile.Isa. 75. 7.  
Amos 2. 6.  
Resp.Heir. lib. 4.  
Com. in  
Jer.  
Irenaeus ad  
Heres. lib.  
4. c. 77.

a few, Isa. 10. 7. And for that God threatens to punish him.

It may be, yet further, objected; Every Agent produceth the like unto itself, God being absolutely good, both *in se*, and *extra se* (good in himself, and good to all his Creatures) cannot but produce a like A<sup>d</sup>: Now punishments and afflictions are evil, and so termed, Isa 45. 7. Amos 3. 6. How then can God be the Author of them?

Revenge and Punishments are called *Evil* in Scripture, *Non quod per se mala sunt*, not because they are of themselves Evil, *sed quod patientibus mala esse videantur*: but because they seem evil to those that suffer them (saith one of the Antient). Nay, the very torments of Hell (saith another) are not indeed, and of their nature evil; but *mala sunt his, qui incidunt in ea*, they are evil to such as fall into them, but *bona ex justitia Dei*, good they are, as they proceed from God's Justice, and tend to his Glory. And *Augustine*, being demanded by the *Manichees*, *Unde Malum*; If there were not an ill God, as well as a good God; from whence proceeded all that ill which was in the World replied, *Unde malum? quid malum?* From whence comes evil? Why, what is there in the World that you can call evil? I know no such thing.

But the ordinary (and safer) answer to this Objection, is, That Judgments and Punishments are indeed in their own nature evil (as Scripture stylerh them,) being the punishments of sin, the fruits of God's just displeasure, and flashes of hellish torments: Yet, not so simply and absolutely evil, but that there is some respect of good in them. As they proceed from God, the chief good, they are good; whether they are inflicted as punishments by a righteous Judge, or as Chastisements from the hand of a merciful Father. As He willeth them, they must be good, for that His will is the chief Rule of all good; yea, the evil of sin is so far good, as it is willed by God, and as it is a punishment of former sins. And as they are over-ruled by God's Wisdom and Power, they are good through his blessing; becoming means to draw his Elect nearer to the chiefest good; yea, let God's Judgments go as high as they can in this World, in Plaguing of the wicked, *Etsi novum videtur, quod dicere volo*,  
(saith



(saith *Origen*;) *dicam tamen*, Though it be strange, that I will say, I will say it, *Eriam bonitas Dei est, qui dicitur furor ejus*, that which we call the anger of God, the wrath of God, the Fury of God, is the goodnesse of God. *Luther* goes yet higher, Hell it self is full of God, and the chief good, no lesse then Heaven; for the Justice of God which shines forth in the damnation of the wicked, is God himself; and God is the chiefest good: And thus much of the Objections made against the Doctrine delivered. Let me now shew you the Grounds of it.

First, God is the first, and supream cause of all, and all second causes are subordinate unto him, and but inferiour means to work his Will; and in their subordinate operations, they are but in the nature of Instruments to the first cause. And however, there is in Nature a concatenation, and linking of Causes together, whereby inferiour Causes are subordinate one to another; yet so, as that all hold their subordination unto God, who is the first and principal Cause, *Hos. 2. 21, 22. I will hear the Heavens* (saith God), *and the Heavens shall hear the Earth, and the Earth shall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oyle, and they shall hear Jezreel.* Man standeth in need of food; food is not provided without the help of the Earth; the Earth is not fruitful without the Dew of Heaven; the Heavens cannot send their rain without God's appoyntment: So that he is the principal Cause, and first Mover, who sets all inferiour means on Work; one Creature stands in need of another, and depends upon one anothers help; none of them can help, or work without the next cause, to which it is subordinate: but all depends upon God, he hears them all; and by that vertue which they receive from him the first and chief Cause, they have all their vertue and efficacy, without which they could do nothing: In regard whereof, all the Effects and Actions of secondary causes are not so properly the effects of them, as of that cause which is first and principal: As the Scribe is more properly sayd to write, than the pen which he writeth with; and the Workman to do the work, rather then the tools which he useth as his Instruments in doing of the Work: So the Lord, Who is the chief Agent, and first Mover in all Actions, may more fitly and properly be sayd to effect, and bring things to passe, then any inferiour or sub-

*Reas. I.*

*Hos. 2. 21, 22.*

ordinate Cause, they being but his Instruments that he works by. Who ever (then) may have a hand in afflicting and punishing of us, they are but Instruments, as the Rod, or Axe in his hand, to effect his good will and pleasure, he it is that works by them.

Reas. 2.

Secondly, To revenge is God's Prerogative: Three things he reserves to himself; The glory of Works and Actions, the Judgment of Secrets, and the Revenge of Injuries (saith one): And he saith no more then what the Scripture saith, in so saying. For it is written, *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord,*

Rom. 12.

19.

Where we see, 1<sup>st</sup>. God's Challenge, *Vengeance is mine*: 2<sup>ly</sup>, His Execution of it, *I will Repay*: 3<sup>ly</sup>, His Subscription of his great name thereunto, *saith the Lord*. And that this is the Lords true Act and Deed, and a Faithful Copy out of the Original, St. Paul, the Register of God's Holy Spirit gives witness, with *Scriptum est, It is written*: And so we find it,

Deut. 32.

35.

God sometimes may send us our payment by the hand of the Ministers of the Word, Who have *Vengeance in a readinesse against all disobedience*, 2 Cor. 10. 6. which *Vengeance is spiritual* (saith the Apostle), and mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, ver<sup>se</sup> 6. And is to be understood especially of the threatenings and denunciations of God's Judgments against offenders; but the Execution is left to God, for that we know He will repay, and in his own time fullfil: And sometimes that *Vengeance* is Corporal, reaching but the Body:

2 Cor. 10.

6.

which is partly inflicted by his substitutes the Magistrate, or other Messengers of his wrath, Rom. 13. 4. And partly referred to the Lords own hand, immediately to inflict; Particularly in this Life; and Generally at the last great Day of Vengeance; 2 Thes. 1. 8. Whether Vengeance taken, be mediate, or immediate, upon Body or Soul, or both; *We know him that hath said, Vengeance is mine, and I will recompence, saith the Lord,* Heb. 10.

Rom. 13. 4.

2 Thes. 1. 8

Heb. 10.

13.

13.

Reas. 3.

Jam. 1. 17.

Lastly, Every good thing is of God; so teacheth St. James 1. 17. Now if every punishment be a good thing (though not simply in it self and in its own nature, but) as it is a just work, and having a good end (as before hath bin shewed), we must needs conclude, that it hath God for the Authour, whoever be the

Instru-



Instrument. But this is a Poynt that needs not so much evident Demonstration as serious Consideration, and right and reasonable Application, which now we fall upon.

From this that hath bin delivered of God's being the principal Author, and Efficient of those evils which do befall us; They of the Church of *Rome* would make the World believe, that we of the Reformed Church, make God to be the *Author of sin*, and that the *Adultery of David*, *Treason of Judas*, &c. by our Doctrine werethe proper work of God, which is a Devilish slander that they cast upon us: This we say that in a sinful Action there are two things, *Actio* and *Actionis irrestitudo*: there is an *Entity*, Being, or Action; and there is of that Entity, Being, or Action, a *crookednesse* obliquity, or naughtinesse which is *Actionis Malitia* (as they call it.) unlawfulnesse, transgression, pravity, that in every such action is contained: And so *Aquinas* himself doth teach us to distinguish, and illustrates the same in a lame legg, wherein are two qualities, *ability to go*, but *inability to go upright*; the going and stirring, that it hath, is from the virtue that moverh it, from God Almighty, in whom *we live, move, and have our being*; But the lamenesse and debility of the legg, belongeth to another Cause; Distortion, Crookedness, or some other Impotency in the legg it self: So the action, or motion it self in every evil action, is from a good Author, but the evil in the action from a bad Author; even from the impure fountain of man's corrupt heart, whose *imaginations are evil, and only evil continually*. But our Church hath bin justified by her Children, sufficiently in this poynt. I passe it.

Use 1.

Prim.  
Secun.  
Quest. 71.  
Art. 6. Con-  
clus.  
Quest. 79.  
Art. 2. Con-  
clus.  
Aq. 17. 28.

There are other prophane wretches amongst our selves, who bark against the Justice of God, and make a causelesse complaint against him, as if He were the cause of all their Adulteries, Murthers, Robberies, &c. They do (they say) but the will of God, and *who can resist that*? The will of God indeed cannot be resisted; ungracious Instruments in all their outrages, shall do that service to God, which they dream not of: God saith, Kill not, Rob not; they contradict Him, and will Rob and Kill. Even then, though they violate the Law of God; Yet, His will is accomplished, and in the same action some other way performed than they intended: But this is another will than that they should

Use 2.

Rom. 9.

should walk by; a secret will (which the very Devils in Hell cannot but observe, and give obedience unto). It is the revealed will, recorded in Scripture; published, and proclaimed by Prophets, Promises, Threatnings; that should be our Rule, which not conforming unto, (albeit you do the other, yet) woful will be the wages which you will receive for so doing.

Use 3.

But the principal use that I would perswade you to make of the Poynt, is, In all Judgments that do befall us, learn to turn your eyes from all those Instruments and Organs of God's Vengeance, (which are but secondary Causes, and subservient to a higher hand), and truly judge of the true Author of them. This is a lesson not so soon learned, as is conceived: It is an easie matter to feel the smart of a Judgment, but not so easie to see the hand of God in inflicting that Judgment on us. No man is so blind, so stupid, as that he doth not see his affliction, that is, *feel it*; but we must see it so, as that we see through it; and that we do not, unlesse we see the hand of God therein ordaining, inflicting, and ordering of it: *Belshazzar* saw the fingers of a mans hand-writing upon the Wall, yet that was God's hand, albeit he could not read the writing: We must see our affliction so, as we must see it to be the hand of God, albeit we see not presently what will be the issue of it; and till we see that, we see nothing, as we should see.

Dan. 5. 5.

Zach. 11. 7  
Enlightned

When God speaks by his Prophet *Zachary* of breaking his two Staves, Beauty, and Bands, wherewith he fed the Flock; that is, the staff of his gracious Protection, and fatherly Correction, signifying thereby, that he would no more take charge of so refractory a People, whatsoever calamity befell them, He would not put to his hand to help them, or redresse them, Zach. 11. 9. *That which dyeth, let it dye, and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off*: Upon this cutting off of the stiff-necked and rebellious, the poor of the Flock that waited upon God, knew that it was the Word of the Lord, verse 11. Those humble and meek Servants of God which waited upon him conscientiously, in that sinful and wicked Generation, well knew that it was the just will and pleasure of God to deal so severely with so Rebellious a People: They acknowledged God's hand to be therein, and that He was the inflicter of those Judgments on them. It is not every mans

Verse 11.

Case



Cafe to see God, and acknowledge the hand of God in his Judgments; onely the *poor of the Sheep*, such as discern their own poverty and unworthynesse, can make that use of Gods Judgments, so as to find Gods hand, and then Gods purpose in it.

This did *Joseph*; *You sent me not hither* (saith he unto his Brethren,) *but God sent me hither before you, to preserve you*, Gen. 45. 5, 7. So *Ely*, when he heard that the *Philistines* should kill his two sons, and take away the Ark, *It is the Lord* (saith he), 1 Sam. 3. 18. And *David* had learned thus to look on all his Enemies, as on God's Instruments; *Deliver my Soul from the Wicked, which is thy Sword, from men which are thy hand O God*, Psal. 17. 13, 15. But it is otherwise with worldly and carnal men. In all Judgments that fall out, with *Balaam*, they see the *Asse*; but not the *Angel*, and so extend their rage against the dumb Beast (which it may be deserves no blame), and slander, sometimes the Aire, sometimes the Wind and Weather, sometimes the Starrs, sometimes the Fire, sometimes the Water; attributing all their Sufferings to things in nature, rather then unto God (as though there were an opposition, and not a subordination betwixt God and his Creatures in their operations), and in so doing, they do but resemble the Dog that snarls at the stone, not regarding the hand that cast it: Or as if a Traytor, sentenced to dye, should quarrel with the Axe, or fall foul upon his Executioner.

Gen. 45. 5, 7.

1 Sam. 3. 18.

Psal. 17. 13, 14.

I speak not this, as if the Inferiour causes of our miseries, and Instruments of God's vengeance, were altogether to be neglected: (for, albeit in divers Judgments that are inflicted on us, we are to look wholly upon the hand of God therein; As when he useth such means and Instruments to correct us by, as have in themselves no malignity against us, nor will to hurt us; as Fire, Water, Aire; which are God's bare Instruments for effecting of his Will): Yet when he useth the reasonable Creature, as his Agent, we are to have some respect to him, in regard of that maglinity and sin which is in him, whereby they desire our destruction and hurt, rather then the executing of God's good will and pleasure; whose malice and rage, iniquity and cruelty, we are no way to justifie and excuse, but hate and shun by all

Joh. 19.  
10, 11.

all good means; endeavouring to crosse them in their wicked purposes, and free our selves (what may be) from their violence. But it is this we drive at, that we would learn to acknowledge God's hand to be the Principal in all, and have our eyes fixed especially upon him; knowing, as Christ said to *Pilate*, they could have no power at all against us, *unlesse it were given them from above*, Joh. 19. 10, 11.

Dr. Donne.

It is one degree of good Husbandry, in ill Husbands (saith one), to bring all their debts into one hand: So shall that man husband his Afflictions well, that puts them all upon his debts to God, and leavs out the consideration of the Instrument: For in so doing we shall be the better enabled.

Psal. 39. 9.

2 Sam. 16.

6.  
Explained.

Ver. 10.

First, To *bear them patiently*, which is very hard for Flesh and Blood to do: *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth* (saith David Psal. 39. 9.) *because thou didst it*: As if he should have said, I should have spoke again, and spoken, it may be, very passionately, when *Shimei* curst me, rayled on me, and cast stones at me; I should not have born it but that I saw thy hand therein; Thou hast said unto him, *Curse David*; otherwise, that Dogg should not have wagged his Tongue against me, 2 Sam. 15. 10. This kept him from venting fretfull speeches. *Gregory Nyssa* calls *Basil*, *Ambidextrum*; (but in a good sense,) for that he took every thing that came, by the right handle; and with the right hand, because he saw it to come from God: Afflictions are the more wellcome, when we see them to be His; And experience teacheth, that in all those Afflictions which come immediately from God, we are ordinarily more patient, than in those that come Instrumentally from others. What *Laban* and *Rehuel* said, let us say in every Judgment that we ly under; *This thing is proceeded of the Lord, I cannot therefore say either good or evil*, Gen. 24. 5. Nay, Let us (as better instructed,) alter the words a little, saying; *This thing is proceeded from the Lord; this Judgment, this Afflictions, this Crosse is sent from Him, I cannot therefore but speak good of it, and not evil*.

Gen. 24. 5.

Secondly, We shall (by this consideration) be better enabled to bear our Afflictions *profitably* and *fruitfully*; It will humble us, and cause us to throw our selves low, before the Throne of Grace.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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Grace. *Humble your selves under the mighty hand of God* (saith Peter, 1 Epist. 5. 6.) *that He may exalt you in due time.* When we see God's holy hand in them, and that it is He that smites, we cannot (unlesse our hearts be very obdurate) but be stirred up to go to Him, and humble our selves in his sight: We shall confesse his Righteousnesse, and our own Unworthinesse, and with *Mauritius* (that good Emperour), who having his two Sons, and three Daughters, and then his godly Wife *Constantina*, slain before his eyes, by *Phocas* (whom the Souldiers had proclaimed Emperour in his room), uttered that memorable saying of the Prophet, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are all thy Judgments.* It will cause us to fly to him for help alone; *Come, let us return unto the Lord, for it is He that hath wounded us,* &c. Hos. 6. 1. Our Peace is to be made, not with the Jaylor, but with the Judge; not with the Bailly, but with the Creditor; all our work under Affliction lyes in Heaven: Like *Benhadad's* best Counsellour's, who sent him with a Coard about his Neck, to the merciful King of *Israel*; so do our Afflictions (when we once see that the hand of God is in them) send us to the God of Heaven for mercy: many a Soul hath Affliction whipt to Heaven, which otherwise (in all likelyhood) would never have come thither.

1 Pet. 5. 6.

Hos. 6. 1.

1 King. 20.  
31.

Thirdly, This will be a means whereby we shall be enabled to bear those Tribulations and Afflictions which shall lye upon us, more comfortably and chearfully. The Prophet *Habakkuk* speaking of those sad and heavy calamities which the Church then lay under, by reason of the *Chaldaans*; gathered much comfort from this consideration, *We shall not dy,* (saith he Hab. 1. 12.) *O Lord, thou hast ordained them for Judgment,* and, *O mighty God thou hast established them for Correction;* As if he should have said; Thou, O Lord my God, hast ordained these *Chaldees* most justly for our Punishment, and set them on work for our Correction, not for our destruction; and, they being but as the Rod in thy hand, we rest assured, that thou hast not designed us to utter extirpation; we shall not dy, albeit thou fetchest blood from us, and causest us to smart soar. A merciful Father, albeit he takes a swindging Rod into his hand, to correct his Child, yet he intends not to kill his Child with that Rod, nor will he spend

Hab. 1. 12.  
Explained.

it wholly upon the back of his tender Infant : When we see bloody Tyrants, and Oppressors, let loose upon us, this may terrify us very much ; but when we consider, that they are but as Rods in the hand of a gracious God, and tender-hearted Father, who hath the ruling and ordering of them , it must needs be a great cheering to our Spirits. And thus God comforteth his Church, Jer. 30. 11. *I am with thee (saith the Lord) to save thee : though I make a full end of all Nations whither I have scattered thee ; yet will I not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.* God will certainly correct those whom he loves ; but the Rods that he useth about his own, as they are in his hand, so they are bound about with Mercy, as God intimates to David, in that promise which He made to him concerning Solomon ; *If he commit Iniquity, I will chasten him with the Rod of men, and with the stripes of the Children of men ;* that is, gently and favourably, as loving Parents use to correct the Children that they love ; *but my Mercy shall not depart away from him ;* still the Rod shall be bound up with Mercy ; And so are all God's Rods wherewith he scourgeth His. And when he hath made use of that Rod in scourging of his own, at last he will cast that Rod away into the fire, as God speaketh concerning the *Assyrian*, that Rod of his Anger, and Staff of his Indignation. *The Assyrian shall smite thee with a Rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee after the manner of Egypt : for yet a very little while, and the Indignation shall cease, and mine Anger in their destruction,* Isa. 10. 24. 25.

With this consideration, that God's hand is in all, our blessed Saviour sustained himself in his Sufferings, *Shall I not drink of the Cup my Father hath given me to drink,* Joh. 18. 11. It is a Cup, not a Sea, of wrath ; our Afflictions are all measured by a wise God ; Satan cannot put in more than God knows medicinal, Rev. 2. 10.

It is a Cup in a Father's hand, when he reacheth it unto us, we should willingly receive it ; the stubbornest Child from a Father receives Correction, although he will not from a Stranger, Heb. 12. 9. Heb. 12. 9.

Jer. 30. 11.

2 Sam. 7.  
14.Isa. 10. 24.  
25.Joh. 18. 11  
Explained.

Rev. 2. 10.

Heb. 12. 9.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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It is given us to drink; a Potion it is, that must be taken; bitter indeed at the top, but sweet at the bottom, *Heb. 12. 11.* If it be too much for one draught, we shall take it at two; one draught now, another anon; we may not spill it, drink it we must.

*Heb. 12. 11*

And shall I not drink it, seeing the Physician is experienced; the Physick is allayed and tempered; and by the hand of a Father tendred to us? Let us comfortably bear, what cross soever God shall be pleased to lay upon us.

To conclude all in a word, Let us remember, that when God's Rod, in Moses hand, was turned into a Serpent, it did no harm; it did but devour up other Serpents; it stung no body, and it quickly turned into a Rod again: When God's Rods lye heaviest upon us, if they devour up other Rods, that is, enable us to put off the consideration of the malice of other men, and all displeasure towards them, and see all, as coming from the most High, for sin; then these Rods have wrought a good effect indeed, then we shall find, in due time, that these Rods will be comfortable; And thou shalt have just cause given thee to say with David, *It is good for me that I have been corrected*, *Psal. 119.* And so, we have done with this. Now we come to what is principally intended in the words.

*Exod. 7.  
10, 12.*

*Ps. 119. 71.*

*Then, after that, thou shalt cut it down. ]*

That is, after thou hast born with it, and I taken pains about it, if no Fruit follow, the Axe shall. Our Inference is,

Text.

*Greatest Severity attends upon despised Meccrey. ]*

If, after all God's pains and patience, we remain unfruitful and impenitent: nothing but extremity of Justice is to be expected.

Doct.

Hear what is threatned against all such as shall abuse God's goodnesse; contemn his Mercy; sleight his threatnings; flattering themselves in their wicked waies, saying; *I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of my heart, adding drunkennesse to thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but the Anger of the Lord, ( even his fierce Anger, ) and his Jealousy ( which, as Solomon saith, is the rage of a man, and causeth him not to spare in the day of revenge, Prov. 6. 34. ) shall smock against that man,* which is a Sign of hot displeasure, and soar Indignation, ( as we

*Deut. 29.  
19. 20.*

*Pro. 6. 34.*

Psal. 18. 9.  
& 74. 1.  
Isa. 42. 13.  
Enlightened

read, Psal. 18. 9. & 74. 1.) The Prophet *Isay* illustrates this by two excellent Similitudes.

*The Lord shall go forth (saith the Prophet, Isa. 42. 13.) as a mighty man, he shall stir up Himself; like a man of warr, He shall cry, yea, roar against his Enemies:* That Similitude is taken from Military affaires, or the practise of Souldiers in the day of Battle, who, to manifest the alacrity of their Spirits, and for the terrour of their Enemies, set upon them with a great Cry and shout; So will God, when he comes against those who contemn and reject that gracious offer of Christ, (there prophesied of, and before held forth in beauty and glory,) He will stir up his wrath against them, and come upon them like a Gyant, or Mighty man, (which word is used to set forth the Might wherewith God cometh to revenge; he will put all his strength to it, as it were) that shouteth by reason of Wine: as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. 78. 65. He will smite his Enemies in the hinder parts, and put them to a perpetual reproach.*

The Prophet goes on, and further illustrates this soar Severity which shall be used towards the despisers of his Mercy, by a Similitude of a Woman in Child-birth, ver. 14. *I have a long time holden my peace, I have been still, and refrained myself; now will I cry like a travelling Woman, I will destroy and devour at once.* The Woman in travell, when her pains come first upon her, bites them in, what may be; but when her last throwes of Child-birth are come, she can no longer hide them: So, although I have long refrained my self (saith God) from taking revenge upon these Enemies of mine: yet, now I can forbear no longer, my heavy wrath shall break out upon them to their utter destruction: *Those mine Enemies that will not have me to reign over them, bring them and slay them here before my face, Luk. 19. 27.* A soar and severe Sentence!

I might heap up proofs for the Confirmation of the Poynt in hand; but I shall onely app y my self to the Instance in my Text: This Jewish Figg-Tree, (that State and Nation of the Jews,) whereof the Apostle speaking to the Gentiles, wills them to behold God's sever e dealing with them, that by them they might be warned not to abuse the goodnesse of God. *Behold therefore (saith he) the Goodness and Severity of God on them which* sell,

[Ver. 9, 10.

Ps. 78. 65.

Luk. 19. 27

Pf. 86. 21.  
Amos 3. 1,  
2.  
Mat. 11. 23  
Rom. 2. 4,  
5.



# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

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fell, *Severity*; but towards thee goodnesse, if thou continue in his goodnesse, otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off, Rom. 11. 22.

Rom. 11.  
22.

They that fell were the Jews; and they were severely dealt withal, for abusing of God's goodnesse, they were *broken off* from the Root: but Goodnesse towards the Gentiles, provided that they continue in that goodnesse, (for upon that condition it is, that they hold it,) otherwise, if they forsake and lose the Gospel, and abuse Goodnesse, they must look to be also *cut off*, which is more than to be *broken off*, (as *Origen* doth observe, and thence infers, that the Judgment of the Gentiles shall be greater than that of the Jews, in case they fall away.) And forasmuch as we are willed to Behold this *Severity* of God towards them (that is, to note it, and mark it well,) Give me leave to stop a little, and acquaint you with the passages of God's *Severity*, in the cutting down that Nation; and give you a brief Relation of the destruction and final ruine of it, as History records it.

††

Never was Nation more beloved of God, nor any People on Earth higher in God's favour; No People graced with so many priviledges, nor blessed with so many pledges of his favour, as the Apostle sheweth, Rom. 3. 1, 2. & 9. 4, 5. But, despising the riches of God's Grace, in rejecting the Gospel, persecuting of the Truth, murdering of God's Prophets, and putting of the Lord of Life himself to death; God cut them down with the greatest *Severity* that ever befell any Nation under Heaven.

Rom. 3. 1,  
2, & 9. 4, 5.

The daies came upon them, that Christ (when he preached amongst them) foretold; *Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, & compass thee round, & keep thee in on every side; And shall lay thee even with the ground, & thy Children within thee, & they shall not leave thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation*, Luk. 19. 43, 44. And all this hapned unto them, about 70 years after the Nativity of our Saviour, & about 38 years after his Ascension, when as the Emperor *Vespasian*, & his son *Titus* came against *Jerusalem*, with a very great Army, laying siege against it, & within 3 daies space, made a firm wall about it, & upon that set Towers and Castles, lest any of the Jews should fly to save themselves; *Jerusalem* being then full of People: For (besides the Inhabitants of the City,) about three hundred thousand Jews were come unto *Jerusalem*, to celebrate the Feast of the Passover, (which

Luk. 19.  
43, 44.

which at that time fell out). These the enemy gave way unto to enter, and then upon the sudden, drew up their forces; and straitly beleaguered them, so as that all this huge multitude were imprisoned within the Walls of the City, where also they were partakers of no small misery.

For, besides the enemy without, there were three great Factions at this time that swayed in *Jerusalem* (which *Vespasian* took advantage of): One of *Elaezer* the Priest, the son of *Simon*; the second of *Zelos* as the chief Prince, which held the Temple; The third of *Johannes Giscaleenus*, a bloody and cruel fellow, which had the command of the inferiour City: These weakened themselves much more by their civil and intestine Wars, and continued slaughters, then the Enemy by his invasion; They turned their Swords upon themselves, as if their own hands had bin ordained to be their Executioners; Inasmuch as that the whole City and Temple were filled with dead Bodies, and the Kennels rann with the blood of the slain; Besides, the common insolencies, and publique rapins that were amongst them, They fired the City, and dispoyled the Temple, killed the Priests; and, without any regard at all of their future defence, set fire on the store-house, wherein their provision lay, for the sustentation of their City.

Hence arose a great Famine amongst them, such as no History can parallel; For their ordinary sustenance being consumed and spent, the flesh of Horses, Asses, Doggs, Rats, Snakes, Adders, seemed good and pleasant unto their tastes; when such food fayled them, they were driven to eat (that which unreasonable Creatures would not); of their leather bridles, of their leather girdles, of their leather shoes they made them meat; some would feed upon Snails & Worms, others upon old Hay chopped small; The shreadings of Pot-herbs cast out, trodden under foot and withered, were taken up again for nourishment. Doves dung, Oxe dung, and Mins dung, they were constrained to feed upon: *Miserabilis cibus, esca lacrymabilis*, miserable meat, lamentable food; yet would the Child snatch it from the Parent, and the Parent from the jaws of the Child; nearest and dearest Friends would kill one another for a crust of Bread, and cut one anothers throats for the morsels they had in their Bellies.

The

*Quis furor hic, Cives?*

Pedro Mexia in  
*vitis Imperat. in Vespasian. p.*  
126.

Pontan. Bibliothec.  
Conc. Tom.  
4. ad Rom.  
10. Trinit.  
Egchippus  
*de excidio Hierosolym.*  
l. 1. c. 17,  
18.



The fairest Lady would commit open Adultery for a little sustentance; some to prolong their miserable lives, would after the manner of Doggs, eat up that which others had vomited; yea, feed on the dead bodies of those, who a little before had dyed and perished: Mothers stuck not to eat their own Children, and those Wombs that gave them harbour, were now become the places for their Sepulture and burial.

Amongst many other accidents in this unheard of Famine, one is very memorable, mentioned by *Egesippus* and *Josephus* (who was an eye-witnesse of this their misery), of an outrage which a Mother committed upon her own Son: her name was *Mary*, of the stock of *Eleazer*, and of the Town *Bethazor*; she was of a Noble and Rich Family, and went to *Jerusalem* in hope of safety; thither she carried her Riches and all her Substance, but the Seditious soon spoyled her of all, took away her Substance and Sustenance, and utterly deprived her of all means of livelihood; upon her knees she desired but some little part of that she had, for the preservation of her life and sucking Infant, but the Seditious gave little ear to her intreaties; when she saw that nothing would prevail, and that through the whole City not one morsel was to be found, and being prest partly by extremum necessity, and partly with furious rage; she took her tender Babe as it was sucking, from her Breast, and thus spake to it, *Miserum te, Infans, in bello & fame & seditione, cui te servavero? &c.* Little Infant, poor Wretch, in War, in Famine, in Sedition; for whom shall I preserve thee? for whom shall I save thee alive? If thou livest, thou must be a slave to the Romans, but Famine prevents thy servitude; yea, and the malicious Jews are more cruel then either the Romans or the Famine; Be thou therefore *mibi cibus, seditiosis furia, humana vite fabula*, Meat to me, a fury to the Malicious, and even a mock of the life of Man: Return, Oh my Child, into nature's secret closet, for in that Chamber where thou receivedst breath, there is a Tomb prepared for thee; What wouldst thou do, my Boy, if thou hadst a Son? Why, I have done hitherto what piety commanded; Now let me do what Famine enforceth. When she had thus spoken (saith my Authour) she swallowed down her grief, and fell into a fit of frenzy, and imbrued her hands

*Et plerique  
aliorum vo-  
mitus esca  
suit.*

*Joseph. de  
bello Judai.  
lib. 7. c. 18.  
Egesip. de  
Excid. Hi-  
er. lib. 5.  
c. 40.  
Nicephor.  
Chrysost.*

*Redi, fili,  
in illud na-  
turale se-  
cretum. In  
quo domici-  
lio sumpsisti  
spiritum,  
in eo tibi  
tumulus de-  
functo pa-  
ratur.*

in

## The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

Contami-  
natissimi  
nidoris o-  
dore capii.

in the blood of that harmelesse, sucking and silly Infant, the fruit of her own Womb : The body of it she boyled or roasted, and eat the one half, the remainder she reserved for another repast.

The mutinous Soldiers of the Town (drawn by the scent and savour of this meat) brake into this Womans house, threatened to slay her, unless she would discover where that meat was hid; She told them, she had meat indeed, and had reserved it for her self; notwithstanding, since they so urged her, she would bring it to them, which she did, and so brought them to the reliques of her son, which she uncovered, shewing them the head and feet, and offered it unto them; saying, Look, here is just half, here is your proportion, *Ecce pueri manus una, ecce pes unus, ecce dimidium reliqui corporis!* Lo, here is one of my boy's hands, here is one of his feet, and here is half the rest of his body! And think not that it was another's, I tell you, it was my own sweet Child's, *Nunquam mihi fuisti dulcior fili:* Thou wert never sweeter to me, O my Son, thy sweetnesse hath upheld my life: And when the seditious (through horror) started back, she cryed unto them, Why eat you not? I am not hungry now, my Child hath satiated me, *Gustate et videte quia suavis filium meum est,* Taste ye, and see how sweet my Son is; make not your selves more tender then a Mother, more faint-hearted then a Woman; If you will not eat, it shall remain for me his Mother; The Soldiers departing, related that execrable fact, at which every one that heard it, trembled, as though himself had done the deed.

When the Famine had thus played his part, then came the Pestilence; procured, partly through the stench of the bodies, that lay unburied, and partly by the multitude of massacres that daylie happened; The Contagion of which disease, was so violent, as that it took away the senses of many, and they became mad; It layd along whole herds of them groveling upon the Ground, nor was there any Room or Time to bury them; For, as Wives and Kindred were putting the dead into the grave, they also dyed. Within the compasse of eleven weeks, saith *Egesippus*, there were carryed out by one gate of the City 11,000 dead bodies, yet could not the City be emptyed, but

Houses



Houses were filled with the dead Carcasses of Infants and Children; And multitudes cast over the Walls into the Ditches of the City, for that the Earth could not contain their Dead. Which when *Titus* saw, and that the putrefaction swamm upon the brim of the Ditch, he lifted up his eyes and hands to Heaven, and with a deep sigh he called God to witnesse, that it was not his cruelty, but the Judgment of God upon them for their Impiety.

*Jerusalem* being brought thus low with Sedition, Famine, and Pestilence; was now ready to become a prey unto the Enemy: who perceiving that the Jews did not appear upon the Walls as in former times, caused his Engins of battery to be brought, and at length with great difficulty won one Wall, and then another, at last a third; He took the Tower of *Antonia*, and there placed a Garrison; And the North-Gate, which they burnt down with fire: They made a breach into the Temple, and first fired the Gate of it (which was all covered over with Gold and Silver), Then the Soldiers three Days after fired the Temple it self, which was seven years a Building; and which *Titus* would fain have saved for the sumptuousnesse of it, but could not.

After this, he won the lower City, whereof *Johannes Giscalenus* had the Command, to whom he before had made a speech gently entreating him to leave off his Rebellion, and the City should be spared, and no more outrages committed; but it little prevailed: whereupon in a rage he gave the signal to his Souldiers, who with Fire and Sword consumed it, and within a short space after took *Giscalenus* alive, whom he reserved for a more cruel death.

The inferiour City being thus taken and destroyed, he began to batter the Walls of the upper City, which, within the space of eighteen dayes after, with great labour and skill he layd flat to the Ground, wasting all with Fire and Sword; sparing neither Man, Woman, nor Child; not leaving one stone upon another: Only, the three Towers which were built by *Herod*, viz, *Hippicus*, *Phaselus*, and *Mariamne* (which were all of shining marble) were left standing, that future Ages seeing the stateliness of those Buildings, might judge of the rest: But these were also destroyed afterwards by *Adrianus Caesar*.

Joseph de  
bello Jud.  
lib. 7. c. 17.  
Euseb. Hist.  
Eccles. lib.  
3. c. 7.  
See Euseb.  
Eccles. Hist.  
lib. 3. cap.  
6.

Thus the Land of *Jury* with the famous City *Jerusalem*, which was the glory of the World, dead in sin and trespasses, became a Carkasse, or smelling Carrion; and so fit to be a prey for the ravening Eagle. An innumerable company dyed by Famine and Pestilence, by Fire and Sword, ten hundred thousand; And besides those dead, *Famè, Merbo, Ferro*; by Famine, Sicknesse, Sword; there were to the number of 7900 taken Captive (others said many more), 7000 were sent into *Egypt*; the properest, and most able were reserved for Triumph; many were distributed through the Provinces; some were slain by the Sword, and by wild Beasts for publique Spectacles; and those that were 16 years of Age and under (with many others), *Cesar* sold, thirty for a penny.

Seven times before had *Jerusalem* bin besieged, as in the Old Testament we may read; First, by *Shishak* King of *Egypt*, 1 King. 14. Secondly, by *Joas* King of *Israel*, 2 King. 4. Thirdly, by *Reshim* King of *Aram*, 2 King. 18. Fourthly, by *Senacherib* King of *Asshur*, 2 King. 19. Fifthly, by the *Assyrian*, in the time of *Manasses*, 2 Chron. 33. 11. Sixthly, by *Pharoah Necho*, in the time of *Jehojakim*, 2 King. 24. Seventhly, in the time of *Zedechiah* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, 2 King. 25. That desolation was fatal, but not final: Divers times the Axe hath bin layd to it, but never to the Root of this Figg-Tree till now, so, as to be utterly cut down, and cast off, and made a *Reproach and Curse* amongst all Nations, as they are at this Day; wandring like Vagabonds in all Countreyes, and made slaves to all Nations, even to the *Mores, Barbarians, and Turks*; bringing upon their heads that imprecation of theirs, *His blood be upon us, and upon our Children*, which hath lyen on them for 1600 years, and yet lyes upon them; Inasmuch that some Jewish *Rabbins* entering into a serious consideration of this their last and greatest Calamity that ever befell them, together with the continuance of it, and casting with themselves what sinne might countervail so heavy a Judgment, have in the end concluded, that it can be no other then the rejecting of the Messiah, and shedding of his blood, which cryeth to Heaven for this Vengeance on them; and certainly, if all Circumstances be observed, it will appear evidently, that Divine Justice did not onely make

even

1 King. 14.  
2 King. 4.  
2 King. 18.  
2 King. 19.  
2 Chron.  
33. 11.  
2 King. 24.  
2 King. 25.

Mar. 27. 25



caven reckonings with them in every particular of our Saviour's sufferings, but also kept the precise Day, and place of payment; beginning first with *Galilee* (Christ's own Country), the place where Christ first preached the Gospel of the Kingdome, and declared the Power of his Deity by many Signs and Wonders: but because his Countrymen shewed least respect unto his Person, and gave least credit unto his Doctrine; it so fell out by the just Judgment of God, that the *Galileans* first smarted for their unbelief, the whole Country being spoyled and wasted by *Vespasian*.

Then for the time that he besieged *Jerusalem*, which was at the *Feast of the Passover*, at which Feast, Christ was Crucified; yea, even on the same Day that our Saviour did suffer, did the Siege begin in the same Place, for from mount *Olivet* did *Titus* view the City, whence our Saviour had viewed it, and wept over it; There the Authors of Christ's Death suffered a most just revenge, where he but eight and thirty years before had suffered.

*Baronius.*

And whereas his Blood was sold for money, the Blood of many of them was shed for money. Divers of them flying for their safety, being taken by the Romans, had Gold found in their Excrements, which for madnesse they had swallowed down, that the Enemy might not have it; which the Soldiers hearing, (and supposing all the Jews had bin full of Gold) through covetousnesse of that gain, in one Night killed 2000 of them, ripping up their Bellies, and searching their intrals for it.

Thirty pence Christ was sold for; so thirty of them were sold for one piece of Silver, who bought his life for thirty pieces of Silver.

The Death which they put Christ unto, was the Death of the Crosse, they hang him on a Tree. And that was repoyed in kind, and with advantage; for so many of the Jews were crucified on the Walls, every day by the Romans (whom they took as they issued forth), that they wanted in the end Crosses for men's bodies, and Trees to hang up any more upon.

Thus we find it true that the Apostle speaks, *1 Thes. 2. 16.* *Wrath is come upon this Nation,* *Ἐκ τὸ τέλός, to the utmost,*

*1 Thes. 2. 16.*

even to perfection (as it were): for, despising God's greatest mercy, they were plagued with greatest severity; A sufficient proof to clear the poynt, *That greatest severity attends upon despised mercy.*

Use.

The use that we should put this unto, is this, in short; Take heed how we despise God's grace and goodnesse, that should lead us to repentance. As there is *Plenitudo Gratia*, so there is *Plenitudo ira*, Plenty of mercy, and Plenty of wrath too: As God is a *God of Mercy*, so he is a *God of Vengeance*. And it is for his honour sometimes to magnifie himself in that respect; These titles given to himself, and appertaining to justice, could not belong to Him, if he should for ever suffer his goodnesse to be despised. *The Lord is known by executing Judgment*, and will be known that way by all despisers, as well as the other way by shewing mercy, *Psal. 9. 16.*

Mahani. 1.

Psal. 9. 16.

And let our own Figg-Tree (this Land and Nation), look about it, yet in time: with us God hath born long, to the Admiration of all Neighbour-Nations; many a time the Axe hath bin up, yet layd down again: As in 88, the Powder plot, &c. Yet a longer time hath bin granted us for fruitfulness, but we are grown rotten at heart, and doted; dying, if not dead: what can be now expected but to be hewen down, and made fuel of? that the Axe should be so layd to the Root, that we should be fell'd, so, as never to rise more? A miserable deceit it is, to think, We may despise God's bounty, yet partake of mercy in the End: *Judgment and Mercy* with God are like *Jacob* and *Esau* in their Mother's Womb: when Judgment like rough-hair'd *Esau*, strives to issue out first, Mercy takes it by the heel, and with *Jacob* endeavours to pull it back; but *Esau* at length will out, though *Jacob* have fast hold on his heel; Judgment will follow, although mercy struggle mightily to stay it. Oh, think of what hath bin related of *Jerusalem's* misery; And make the Case our own. It may be our own, and is like to be our own, if speedy Repentance prevent not: either *Ficus*, or *Focuss*; Fruit, or Fuel; no remedy: the chipps flye, let our Tears flow, before the Tree be down. We are burnt in the Hand already; what Psalm of mercy shall we call for? yet, mercy may be had: whilst the Figg-Tree stands, there is hope. If, notwithstanding all that hath bin sayd, we will go on in our wickedness,



wickedneſs, we ſhall but inhaunce and improve God's wrath ; And who can but pity us, when God's ſoareſt and ſevereſt Judgments do befall us ? So far will thoſe that have Interceded for us, be from ſpeaking any more in our behalf, as that they will ſtand out of the gap, and give way to the ſtroak ; take hold on the hand of Vengeance no more, but reſt contented with God's proceedings : As the Dreſſer here promiſeth to do.

*After that thou ſhalt cut it down].*

From the praſiſe of this Dreſſer, we may learn our Duty, *To reſt ſatiſfied and contented in the juſt and deſerved condemnation of thoſe, who remain unfruitful, under the means ; albeit they are ſuch as we dearly affect.*

*Text.*

*Doct.*

When we have done our Duty, to bring a People to Repentance, and it will not be ; we muſt reſt ſatiſfied in their cutting down, and ſtubbing up after the example of this Dreſſer ; Who, albeit he did much reſpect this Figg-Tree, and bear a great and good affection to it, yet if, after all his pains beſtowed on it, it remains fruitleſs, he ſits down, and intercedes no more in the behalf of it ; but gives way to the Execution of that ſevere ſentence before denounced againſt it, *Cut it down.*

When *Iſrael* was carryed into *Babylon*, and became Captives to them, God commands them to *ſeek the Peace of the City, and pray for it*, *Jer. 29. 7.* which accordingly they did, both by Inſtruction, laying open their errors, and diſcovering their impieties ; and by their Example, praſtiſing their own Religion, even before their faces ; and likewise by their prayers, as they were commanded ; They were not wanting in bringing *Balm* to cure her deſperate wounds, but they found her to be incurable. *We would have healed Babylon, but She is not healed*, ſaith the Church, *Jer. 51. 9.* Why, how ſo ? *She would not be healed* ; She contemned the means, ſcorned their Religion, as appears, *Pſal. 137. 3.* and did caſt away the good counſel which the *Iſraelites* gave them. Or, *She could not be healed* (as ſome read), in regard of the wound, which God's wrath had inflicted on Her : they ſaw, and knew that *the device of the Lord was againſt Babylon to deſtroy it, becauſe it is the Vengeance of the Lord, the Vengeance of his Temple*, verſe 11. Now, what doth the Church in this Caſe ? Upon the conſideration of her obſtinacy and incurableneſs,

*Jer. 29. 7.*

*Dan. 4. 24,  
& 6, 10.*

*Jer. 51. 9.*

*Pſal. 137. 3.*

enrableness, they abandon Her, and leave Her to the Revenge of the Almighty, and will lose no more labour upon Her: *Let us forsake Her* (say they one to another), *and go every man to his own Country.*

The Prophet *Amos*, speaking of the woful fall of the Virgin of *Israel*, *Amos 5.2.* that is, of the Israelitish Commonwealth, for whose mighty sins God had cut them down with his mighty Judgments and Executions, of Sword, Famine, and Pestilence, whereby he had wasted their multitude, from *thousands to hundreds from Hundreds to Tens*: but they being no whit bettered hereby, the Prophet foretells them of woful times, and more evil that shall befall them, but what shall the godly do when they see those foretold Calamities befall *Israel*? Why, The Prudent man shall keep silence in that time, verse 13. As if he should say, Those that are prudent and wise, shall as that time lay their hands upon their mouths in an humble silence, and acknowledgment of God's justice in those events, and rest therewith contented and satisfied.

*Amos 5. 2.*

*Amos 5.*

*13.*

*Explained.*

*Levit. 10. 3*

And such a prudent man was *Aaron*, whose two sons, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, being consumed with fire from the Lord, for that they offered Incense with strange fire (fire not taken from the Altar), whereat *Aaron* could not but be much perplexed (and, it may be, shew some passion), but when *Moses* came unto him, and put him in mind of what the Lord had said, *I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh me, and before the People I will be glorified; then Aaron held his Peace, Levit. 10. 3.* that is, he troubled himself no further, for there is more in that word, than meer silence of Speech; it implies the silence of the heart, and a staying of the Motions thereof: His Children were dear unto him, but the Glory of God was dearer, and in that respect he did rest satisfied.

*Vase 6.*

Yet, lest he and his sons might forget themselves, and prefer carnall respects to God's glory; *Moses* gives them a further Charge. *Uncover not your Heads, neither rend your Cloathes, lest you Dye*, verse 6. The meaning is, that they should not give any testimony of a repining grief and discontentment at this just Judgment of God, lest in his displeasure he consume them also.

And



And this is that which God required of *Samuel* in the behalf of *Saul*, who mourned exceedingly for him, being grieved that that goodly plant, which was so lately set in *Israel* should be so soon withered, *1 Sam. 15. 35.* But God wills him to leave off his mourning, *How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from Reigning over Israel? 1 Sam. 16. 1.* As if he should have sayd, Thou knowest it is my doing, rest thou therefore satisfied, and trouble thy self no further. Thus a good heart should forget earthly respects, and look up to Heaven when God executeth his severest Judgments on sinners, here upon Earth.

*1 Sam. 15. 35.*

*1 Sam. 16. 1.*

For first, It is impossible that God should do wrong to any man: *Is God unrighteous* (saith the Apostle), *who taketh Vengeance? God forbid. Rom. 3. 5.* He abhors the very thought of it, as if he should say, Be it far from me, or any other man, to have so vile and blasphemous a conceit of God, as to imagine that God is unrighteous in punishing; The absurdity of such an opinion, he proves by an Argument taken from the Office of God, which is to Judge the World, *verse 6. For then, How shall God judge the World? And shall not the Judge of all the World do right* (sayd *Abraham*, *Gen. 18. 25.*) He Governs the present World in equity, and in the World to come, He will give to every one according to his doings; therefore, every punishment inflicted upon sinners, how severe soever, either here, or here after, cannot be other, then most just, seeing that Judge who is justice it self doth it; *He is a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, Just and Right is He, Deut. 32. 4. Doth God prevent Judgment? or doth the Almighty prevent Justice* (saith *Bildad*, *Job. 8. 3.*) which Interrogation is a vehement Negation; No, he doth not; let that satisfie us.

*Reas. 1.*

*Rom. 3. 5.*

*Verse 6.*

*Gen. 18. 25.*

*Deut. 32. 4.*

*Job 8. 3.*

2.

Secondly, The honour of God is to be preferred to all Relations whatsoever, as *Moses* intimates in that speech of his to *Aaron*, before mentioned; *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me; and, before all People, I will be glorified.* God, in his just

*Levit. 10. 3*

Exek. 28.  
12, & 38,  
16, 23.

Prov. 16.4

Psal. 51.4.  
Psal. 119.  
75.  
Neh. 9.39.  
Dan. 9.12.

3.  
Mat. 6.18.

Isa. 6.3, 10.  
Rev. 15. &  
18.

just Judgments inflicted upon Sinners, sheweth Himself to be holy and just; and looks to be sanctified of his People, in the acknowledgment of his Holiness and Justice. When He sanctifies himself in the waies of Judgment *upon the wicked*, then He sanctifies himself *in them*, Ezek. 28. 22. & 38. 16, 23. And when his Holiness and Justice is acknowledged in their just and deserved Punishment, then He is sanctified *of or by his People*. Now, God having fully purposed to glorify himself, by all his Creatures, finds no other way left, of reaping any honour from the Wicked, (who will not be reclaimed,) but onely by magnifying Himself in the Judgments that He executeth on them; they make themselves incapable of being *Active Instruments* of His Glory, by performing that which is good in His sight, therefore they shall be *Passive Instruments*, serving to declare His infinite Justice in their destruction: And, when we acknowledge God's Justice and Righteousness in those Judgments inflicted on them; when we justify His sayings, (let Him speak never so sharply,) and clear him in his Judgments (let him deal never so severely, *Psal. 51. 4.*); then He is *Actively* sanctified by us, as He was by *David*, *Psal. 119. 75.* by *Nehemiah*, cap. 9. 33. *Daniel*, 9. 12. and others; Let us so do, and rest satisfied and contented.

Thirdly, It is, and ought to be, the Prayer of every good Christian, That God's Will may be done, *in Earth as it is in Heaven*, Mat. 6. 10. and accordingly, we ought to endeavour to conform our Will to the Wills of the blessed Saints and Angels that are in Heaven, (otherwise our hearts and tongues are strangers in our Petitions :) Now, those in Heaven know no man according to the Flesh; they will and like, whatsoever God willeth and liketh, and rejoyce in that which makes for His Glory: They sing, when, in this World, the hearts of obdurate Sinners are made fat against the day of Slaughter, *Isa. 6. 3, 10.* and when Vengeance is executed on Sinners, *Revel. 15. & 16.* They approve even of the damnation of all Impenitent Sinners, were they, in this life, their dear friends, and intimate acquaintance. Indeed, whilst we are in this life we are not perfect, so as to be  
purged



purged from all drosse and corruption; not to perfected as we shall be, when our Wills are throughly compleat; yet we ought to *strive unto Perfection*, as the Apostle did, *Phil. 3. 14.* And what we cannot here reach, we are to approve of, and that should content us.

There is an Objection, or two, that would be spoke with-  
all. Let us hear what they have to say, before we come to the  
Use.

If we ought thus to conform our Wills to the Will of God,  
and rest satisfied in the destruction of Sinners; what need we to  
admonish them, instruct them, pray for them, and use means for  
their Salvation; seeing their perdition and damnation should  
content us?

*Object.*

As the Will of God is made known unto us, so we ought to  
conform unto it. Thus *David* fasted and prayed for his Child  
that was begotten in Adultery, notwithstanding the prediction  
of *Nathan*; for that he understood conditionally, ( as other  
threatnings, of like nature, were to be understood, ) but when  
he certainly understood, by the event, that God had determined  
the Child should not live; he then riseth from the Earth, where-  
on he lay, he washeth himself, and changeth his apparell, he go-  
eth into the House of God, and worshippeth; then home to his  
own House to eat meat, and now refuseth no comfort, ( who be-  
fore would take none, ) to the admiration of his Servants; and  
being demanded the reason of this strange Change and Alterati-  
on; He tells them, *Whilst the Child was yet alive, I fasted and  
wept; for I said, Who can tell, whether the Lord will be gracious  
unto me, that the Child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore  
should I fast, Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, he  
shall not return to me, 2 Sam. 12. 22, 23.* Upon which passage, a  
very learned and religious Bishop of our Church hath this An-  
notation; Till we know the determination of the Almighty, it is  
free for us to strive, by our Prayers, with Him (not against him);

*Resp.*

*2 Sam. 12.  
22, 23.*

*B. E. Hall.  
Cont.*

SSS

when

when once we know them, it is our Duty to sit down in a silent contentation.

Whilst there is any hope of converting a Sinner, or doing any good unto his Soul, all means are to be used; all waies are to be tried, all Patience to be practised, and all Wisdom to be exercised, all occasions to be taken, that probably may prevail to do him good; Still a wicked man is to be pried, still to be loved, still to be mourned for, and wished well unto; and whose is wanting in his duty herein, hath much to answer for before God: None may give over using the means of a Sinner's reclaiming, till there be no hope at all; And there is hope whilst there is life: Should God, indeed, reveal unto the Church the Reprobation of any Sinner (saith *Augustine*), the Church ought no more to pray, that such a man might be saved, than they are to pray for the Salvation of Devills, and of damned Spirits, (to whom our charity extendeth not, as being incapable of beatifical Vision;) But that God hath not done of any one, save onely of them that sin against the Holy Ghost, (which no private man, but onely the whole Church of God, is fit to judge of.) Yet, by the Event, God revealeth His Justice, and cuts off all hope of amendment by death; And in such a Case, we should rest contented, and bless His Name for their ruine.

Aug. lib. 22.  
de Civ. Dei.  
c. 24.

Object.

Esth. 8.6.

But this Doctrine makes against Christian Charity, which teacheth us to lament for the misery of Sinners, in their Sufferings: And, *Can I endure* (said *Esther*) *to see the evill that shall come unto my People, or how can I endure to see the destruction of my Kindred?* Esther 8.6.

Resp.

We must look upon the Judgments that fall upon Sinners, with a double aspect: Look upon them as they tend to the destruction of the Creature, we then lament; but if we look upon them, as they set forth the Glory of God's Justice, we joyfully approve of them, and rejoyce in them. How often hath a wise Judge passed Sentence upon a Malefactor, with tears in his Eyes, being moved with indignation as they are Malefactors, but with compassion as they are miserable men; Green wood, laid upon the



the fire, both weeps and burns ; it weeps at the ends, and burns in the middle: A deep Vally is clear on the one side, yet cloudy on the other ; so may a Christian mourn in one respect, and grieve in another : When *Joseph* fell upon his Brother *Benjamin*'s neck, his Eyes were full of tears, when his heart was full of Joy. These works of Justice are like to those double-faced pictures ; look upon them one way, and you may behold an ugly shape and visage ; change your posture, and look upon them another way, and you shall see a faire and beautiful Person : Look up to God, and we have cause to rejoyce ; Look upon a Sinner, and there is great cause to mourn (saith *Luther*). In short, we are to be affected in all Judgments that are inflicted on Sinners, as the Author of them is ; who delights not in them as they make the Creature miserable, but as they make His Justice glorious : Now let us apply the Poynt.

*Luther*  
*Tom. i. fol.*  
39.

*Use I.*

Me-thinks, this being laid to heart by such as remain obdurate and impenitent, notwithstanding all the means that hath been used for their amendment, should somewhat startle them : It was a sad Speech, and piercing, that I have heard a godly Mother did sometimes use to a wretchlesse and ungracious Child, whom she had often admonished, over whom she had often lamented and shed tears, and for whom she had often prayed ; but nothing prevailling with him, she at length used this Speech unto him ; Seeing my Sighs, my Tears, my Perswasions, will not prevail, know this, that the time is coming (if God gives thee not Repentance), that I shall rejoyce in thy condemnation and destruction : And it is a truth, For however in this World, we cannot but condole and bewail the misery and ruine of those we do affect, as *David* did his *Abolom* (albeit we rest satisfied with the righteous Judgment of God therein) ; yet, at the last day, there will not be the least sorrow for it ; we shall as well rejoyce in their Damnation, as in the Salvation of others. Oh ! What wofull Lamentation will wretched Sinners make at that day ? when there shall be found not any Friend to pity them, to lend forth one Sigh for them, nor shew any Compassion unto them ? Miserable Creature, to whom wilt thou turn thee ? Not amongst all

# The Figg-less Figg-Tree.

the Celestial Company, shall you find one Comforter, in that day of Vengeance; Not one to speak a word for you; No Dresser of the Vineyard, no Minister, no Intercessor, to be heard making such a suit for an unprofitable Figg-Tree; *Lord, spare it one year more.* Children may call upon their Parents, begg their Prayers, desire some tender Compassion from them; but to little purpose. Parents may desire their Childrento speak one word for them, and in their behalf; they may adjure them by the Womb that bare them, and Papps that gave them suck, to think on their misery, and sollicit on their behalf; but all labour is lost; No Compassion, no naturall Affection will be left; no regard will be had of Kindred, Friends, Alliance, &c. God's Glory onely shall be regarded by the Godly; They will not onely be satisfied and contented with the just Judgments of God upon you, but blesse God for it, and rejoyce in it.

Use 2.

Rom. 3.5.

And whilst we are here upon the Earth, let us learn to glorify God in respect of His Justice, and to conform our Wills in all those Judgments that befall our selves, or others, to His most holy and blessed Will. It is a Lesson, I know, very hard for Flesh and Blood to learn: By nature, we are apt to question the Righteousnesse of God, (at least, secretly in our hearts,) in many of His Judgments, as the Apostle intimates *Rom. 3. 5. Is God unrighteous, that taketh Vengeance? I speak as a man;* As if he should say, I make not this Objection of my self, but every natural man is apt to speak and think so, and judge amisse of God's Justice, and charge Him of cruelty and hardnesse, (as I might shew you in particular, about the Poynt of Election and Reprobation:) How apt are men to call the Equity of God's Decrees into question, and peremptorily to conclude, that the waies of God are not equall, in rejecting the greatest part of Man-kind, and damning them for their Sins, whom He had before-hand pre-ordained to destruction? But why speak I of vain and wicked men? We shall find, that the very best of us are to seek in this Lesson: we are too too apt to murmur and repine at his corrections, and be discontented with His Judgments, as if they were too rigorous and severe; and so we judge, not only of such as are inflicted on our selves, (as did *Job* and *Jeremiah*.)  
but



# The Figg-lefs Figg-Tree.

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but oftentimes, of those which are inflicted upon others. *David* was greatly displeased, because the Lord smote *Uzzah* with death for so small a fault, as he imagined that to be, in staying of the Ark with his hand, when it was ready to fall out of the Cart, *2 Sam. 6. 6, 7, 8.*

*2 Sam. 6. 6, 7, 8.*

But let us now take forth a new Lesson, and learn to praise God for shewing Himself severe, as well as gentle; for his Acts of Justice, as well as for His Acts of Mercy: The good Husband-man is commended for his good Husbandry, in the cutting away dry and withered branches, as well as in pruning those which are fruitful; It is one of God's glorious works, to *cut up*, and *root out*, such Trees as hurt and annoy His Vineyard, as it is to *plant* and *set* his Vineyard with the choicest Plants; and it is as great a fault to robb Him in the one, as in the other. You know how we extoll Princes, when they declare themselves to be wholly devoted to right, so that if their nearest Favourites do things worthy of death, they deliver them up to the hands of Justice: *Mahomet* the Great, in slaying his Minion *Irene*, whom he dearly loved, with his own hand, and in the sight of his People, was highly magnified by them for that Act: Let the King of Kings enjoy the Praise of his just and severe Executions: He looks for Prayse, not onely from *Heaven*, but from *Hell*; As Heaven is for the Praise of his Mercy, so is Hell for the Praise of his Justice. *The Righteous shall rejoyce* (saith *David*, *Psal. 58. 10.*) *when he seeth the Vengeance, he shall wash his feet in the blood of the Wicked*: that is, when he shall see Judgment executed upon the wicked and Ungodly, he shall not onely be glad for the overthrow of the wicked, and praise God for it; but in that blood of theirs which is shed, they shall wash their feet, and make a comfortable Use to themselves thereof: The Feet are the Affections of the Soul, in Scripture-Language, (and he that is washed, needeth not save to wash his Feet, saith Christ). In this Sanguine Bath of the blood of the Wicked, we wash our Feet, when we put off our carnall Affections, and learn to fear God more, love Him the better, &c. and honour Him for His just and righteous Judgments; singing upon such occasions,

*Ps. 58. 10.*

*Joh. 13. 10.*

Rev. 15. 3,  
4.

Sons, the Song of *Moses*, the Servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb, saying; *Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy wayes, thou King of Saints; Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name? For thou onely art Holy; For all Nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy Judgments are made manifest.*

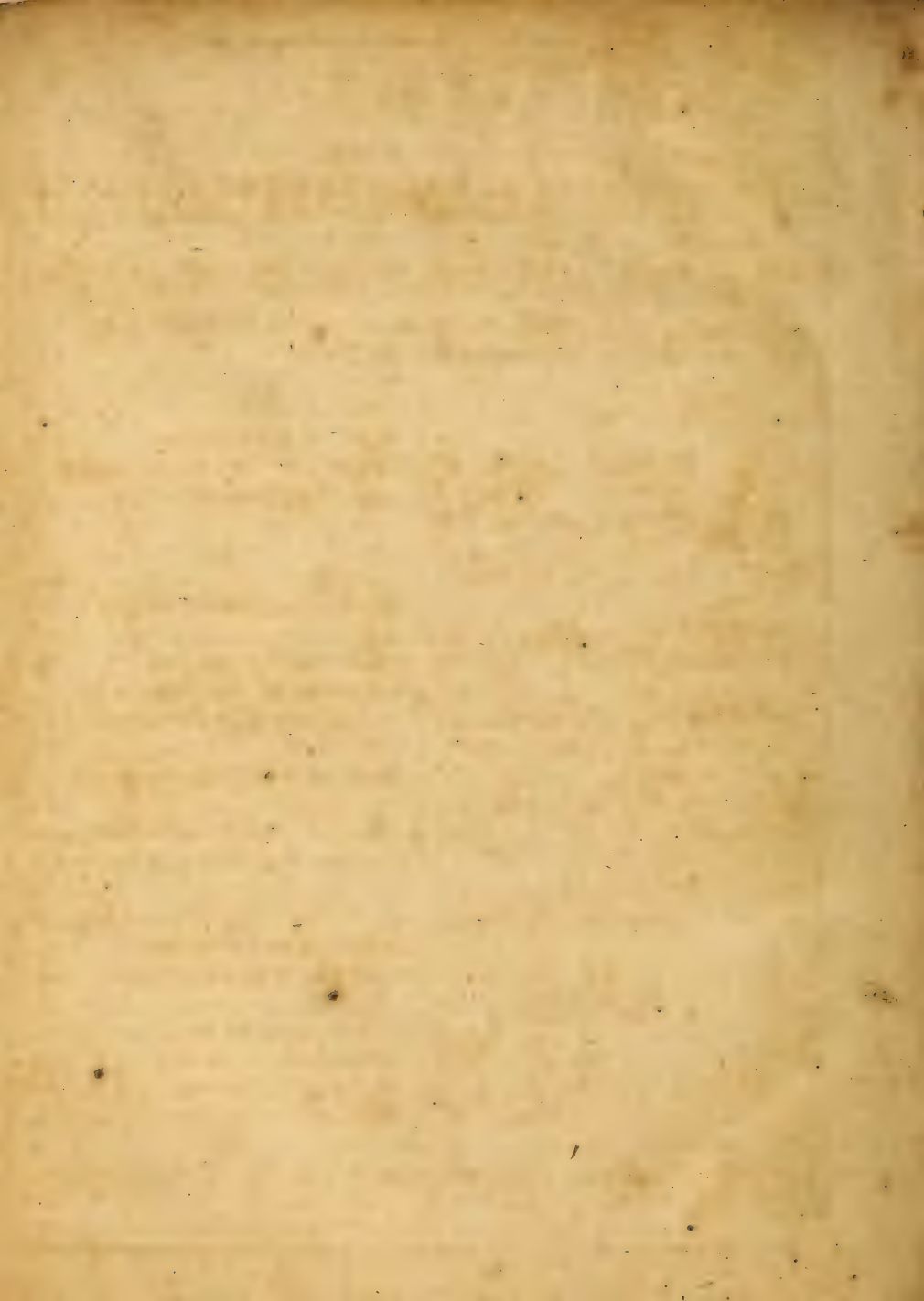
Rev. 16. 7.

*Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy Judgments. Amen, and Amen.*

FINIS.









# The Table Alphabetical, directing the

Reader, to the ready finding out, of the most material things  
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**R** Eader, The faults that have escaped the Presse, are more than I wished, yet fewer than I feared; still we find some work to exercise, both thy Pen and Patience: Be not a Censor, but a Corrector of these ensuing Errata's (which hinder or corrupt the sense): other literal or punctual mistakes, I leave to thy humanity for a pardon.

### ERRATA.

Page.	Line.	Error.	Correction.
1	3	Ensigne,	Engine.
82	3	codds,	todds.
111	31	it not,	it is not.
132	11	house the Lord,	house of the Lord.
45	35	Inspect.	Respect.
161	8	<i>Uzzah,</i>	<i>Uzziah.</i>
174	15	to ther,	to other.
212	9	shaken,	shapen.
301	13	Diamond,	Diadem.
402	30	500 60,	50 or 60.
460	Margent,	<i>ipsa,</i>	<i>ipso.</i>
474	Marg.	Agent,	Agens.
405	17	Moc,	Hole.
494	15	as that,	at thar.

F I N I S



